

CORTEZ;

OR, THE
CONQUEST OF MEXICO:

AS RELATED BY
A FATHER TO HIS CHILDREN,
AND DESIGNED FOR
THE INSTRUCTION OF YOUTH.
IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF
J. H. CAMPE,
(AUTHOR OF THE NEW ROBINSON CRUSOE)

BY
ELIZABETH HELME,
AUTHOR OF
INSTRUCTIVE RAMBLES IN LONDON AND ITS EN-
VIRONS, THE ABRIDGMENT OF PLUTARCH'S
LIVES, ETC. ETC.

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1800.



CONQUEST OF MEXICO

AS RELATED BY

INTRODUCTION

AND ASSIGNED FOR

THE INSTRUCTION OF YOUTH

IN TWO VOLUMES—FOR

TEACHING FROM THE STAFF OF

J. H. CAMPE

AUTHOR OF THE NEW ROBINSON CRUSOE

FOR those who have seen the relation of
Columbus's Voyages, the young people
waited in anxious expectation for their
return, and when they returned, their
narrative of the adventures of the first voyage
of Columbus, they were so full of
gratitude to him, that he was obliged to
their patience, and in order
to instruct them to instruct the more
materially, and in order that they might be
collaboratively meet with in their journey
through life, and in order to be able to
no one prepared to appear unprepared to
do so, all the more anxious to

INTRODUCTION.

FOR some days after the relation of Columbus's Voyages, the young people waited in anxious expectation for their father to give them the promised narrative of Cortez; but however willing to gratify them, he resolved to exercise their patience early in trifles, in order to accustom them to sustain the more material disappointments they must necessarily meet with in their journey through life. Habituated to obedience, no one presumed to appear dissatisfied, though all felt the utmost curiosity to

hear a continuation of Voyages which had so greatly interested them. One afternoon that Frederic and Charlotte were seated after their lessons in the garden, the first-named addressing his sister, said: "Can you guess what I wish for this evening?"

Charlotte. Perhaps the same thing that I desire myself, that our father would relate to us the History of Cortez.

Frederic. You have guessed right; but don't you think, Charlotte, he seems as if he had quite forgotten his promise?

Charlotte. No, no, Frederic, Such good men as our dear father don't forget their promises; and (continued she, jumping up) a sudden thought strikes me; suppose we were to go and seek him (I know that he is somewhere in the garden) and entreat him to oblige us; I do think he would, for I am certain that he loves to give us pleasure.—What say you? Shall we try?

Frederic. With all my heart; and if we should be lucky enough to be so successful—

Charlotte. Oh, never fear; you know he is very good-natured.

With these words she took her brother's hand, and went in search of her father, whom at length they found in
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an harbour near the spot where their conversation had taken place. He had overheard their discourse, and resolved to oblige them: the little pleaders had not therefore much trouble to obtain their request: which he had no sooner agreed to, than jumping, skipping, and exclaiming, Cortez! Cortez! they hastened to the house to collect their brothers to hear the recital. In a few minutes the good man was surrounded with his children, all anxiously inquiring if it were indeed true that they were to be so favoured that evening. Being answered in the affirmative, their satisfaction was not to be restrained; some pulled him by the hands, others hung upon his arms, and two held by the flaps of his coat, until, to get quit of their importunity, he took his place on the turf; some then hastened to seek their mother, who being seated, the children placed themselves around, waiting in anxious silence for the narrative to commence. For some minutes their father enjoyed the eager curiosity that was expressed on their features, when to their great satisfaction he at length began as follows:

CORTEZ.

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CORTEZ.

DIALOGUE I.

THE FATHER.

I AM grieved, my children, to be under the necessity of informing you before-hand, that the pleasure you promise yourselves from my narrative will often give place to melancholy and disgust. I must bring you acquainted with times, in which men were so degenerate, so savage, that it is difficult to distinguish them from wolves, tigers, and other ferocious beasts. This is indeed a gloomy

gloomy scene, and willingly would I have spared you the pain of contemplating it: but some advantage will result to you from the picture: you will be sensible that men are become more humanised, from the rational education they now receive in almost every country of the known world: happy are we to be born in an age where the means of information and of becoming wise, just, and humane, are equally open to all. The principal advantage that we can reap from the history of these barbarous times, is the learning how, justly to appreciate our own happiness and our obligations to the Almighty; and the feeling an increase of affection for those exalted characters which a beneficent Providence has been graciously pleased to make the companions of our earthly pilgrimage. These are the reasons, my children, that induce me to recount to you a narrative so replete with horrors as that of Cortez.

Diego Velasquez had, as I have informed you, rendered himself master of the Isle of Cuba; but the conquest was infinitely beneath his ambition, as he held it at the will of Diego Columbus, whose authority he wished to throw off. The most probable means he conceived of effecting this was, the making of
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some new discovery of importance, which should give him a right to an independent government; he therefore equipped two vessels and a brigantine, directing his views to the West, where there was every reason to believe an extensive continent existed, though yet undiscovered by any European.

Frederic. Pray, father, what is a brigantine?

The Father. An armed vessel, or a small man of war.—He gave the command of this squadron to one Hernandez de Cordova, who put to sea with it.—Hernandez sailed to that part of *Terra Firma* which is called *Yucatan*, and when he had reached the coast, continued the same course till he arrived at *Cumpechy Bay*.

John. Where the logwood, which is used for dyeing, grows; is it not?

The Father. The same.—Hernandez descended on different parts of the coast, and had some bloody encounters with the natives; but I shall pass over these, and hasten to a detail of more important events. The inhabitants of this country were more civilised, and at the same time more warlike, than those of the islands hitherto discovered. They wore quilted habits of cotton stuff; their weapons were wooden scymitars, point-

ed with sharp flints, lances, bows, arrows, and bucklers. Their faces were painted of different colours, and their heads adorned with bunches of feathers: add to this, they were the only people of America who had regular buildings of clay or stone. In several different encounters between them and the Spaniards they had the advantage; but in one of them, the latter took two Indian youths prisoners, who were afterwards baptized by the names of Julian and Melchor, and proved important acquisitions, as the Spaniards made use of them as interpreters and mediators between them and the Mexicans.

One day having landed to fill their jars with fresh water, fifty Indians approached, and demanded if they were come from the place where the sun rose? The Spaniards having answered in the affirmative, the Indians conducted them to a temple built of stone, in which were several idols of different hideous forms, sprinkled with blood apparently but newly shed. Immediately two men in black cloaks, with long black hair rolled up behind, advanced with little chafing-dishes of clay, and throwing into them a sort of rosin, fumigated the Spaniards, and with this

this ceremony ordered them to quit the country under pain of death.— The Spaniards, not thinking it safe to contend, obeyed, and returned to their vessels.

John. What could the savages mean by this fumigation?

The Father. Among the superstitious Americans it was the usual means by which they thought to secure themselves from the effects of witchcraft; to the belief of which all savage nations are bigoted. Doubtless the remark that an odoriferous fumigation dissipates infected vapours, gave rise to the opinion that they might also, by the same means, drive away the evil spirits which their imagination had created. In another descent which they made near *Pontonchan*, they were attacked with such fury by a large body of Indians, that forty-seven men were left dead upon the spot, and the rest so dangerously wounded, that it was with the utmost difficulty they regained their vessels. Of this last number was Hernandez de Cordova himself.

After this terrible defeat, they sailed with all expedition for *Cuba*, where Hernandez, after having given a circumstantial account of the whole to the Governor

Governor Velasquez, expired of his wounds.

Velasquez experienced inexpressible joy at the tidings of the new discoveries made in his name, and resolved to pursue them. He immediately therefore equipped three new vessels, and a brigantine, giving the command to an officer of great courage and experience, named Grijalva, enjoining him expressly to bound his views to discoveries only, without making any establishment in the countries.

Grijalva, like Hernandez, directed his course toward *Yucatan*; but the currents caused him insensibly to deviate a little towards the South; insomuch that he reached land by a different cut. Not far from the Eastern coast of *Yucatan*, he discovered the Isle of *Cozumel*, which is still subject to Spain. From thence he coasted to *Pontonchan*, where the last fatal engagement had taken place. Here, desirous of revenging their countrymen who had been slain, and of wiping off the disgrace of the former defeat, they disembarked. The Indians, elate with their former advantages, marched courageously to attack them; but they were repulsed, and two hundred left dead upon the field. The rest fled, and terror and dismay were spread

spread throughout the country. Grijalva again set sail, and continued to steer in the same direction along the coast. The Spaniards in several districts perceived towns and hamlets regularly built, with houses of stone and clay, which their imagination, as they passed, represented much more considerable than they really were. They fancied they discovered so great a resemblance between Spain and this country, that they gave it the name of *New Spain*, which it has preserved to this day.

From thence they arrived at the mouth of a river, which the natives call *Tabasco*, but to which the Spaniards, in honour of their chief, gave the name of *Grijalva*. It now bears the latter name, but the district it waters is called *Tabasco*. The whole country appeared so extremely fertile, and at the same time so well peopled, that Grijalva could not resist the desire of informing himself more particularly concerning it. He disembarked therefore with all his troops armed, and found a body of Indians assembled, who, by a horrible cry, forbade him to advance. But Grijalva, without regarding their menaces, marched forward, and, halting within arrow-shot, arranged his men in order of battle,

tle, and sent the two young Americans, Julian and Melchor, who had been made captive by Hernandez, to inform them that he was not come to give them the least offence ; but on the contrary to render them service, and that in consequence he was desirous of forming an alliance with them. The Indians, whom the close ranks, dress, and arms of the Europeans had already struck with astonishment, were still more surprised at this declaration. Some of their chiefs however, ventured to advance alone, and were treated by Grijalva with the greatest affability. He assured them by his interpreter that he and his men were the subjects of a great king, the absolute sovereign of all the countries in which the sun rose ; that he had sent him to summon them equally to acknowledge his superiority ; and that upon this point he attended their resolution.

On these words a confused murmur arose among the Indians : at length one of their chiefs demanded silence, and in a firm voice replied : That it appeared extraordinary they should talk of peace, and at the same time come to require their submission as dependants ; that they were astonished also they should propose to them a new master, without being

being first informed whether they were dissatisfied with the one they had till now obeyed ; that, however, as the question was Peace or War, it did not belong to him to give a decisive answer : he would therefore communicate their propositions to his superiors. With these words he left the Spaniards, who were not a little surprised at so rational and decided a reply.

The same chief returned a short time after, and told Grijalva, that his superiors were under no apprehensions concerning the event of the war, if necessary, though no strangers to what had happened at *Pontonchan* ; nevertheless they acknowledged that Peace was better than War, and, as a proof of their sentiments, had brought such provisions as the country afforded, which they desired them to accept. Soon after the Cacique himself appeared unarmed, and with a few attendants. Amicable salutes having passed on both sides, the Cacique drew from a basket which had been brought different sorts of superb armour of gold, ornamented with precious stones, and adorned with beautiful painted feathers, and told Grijalva, that as a proof he loved peace, he requested his acceptance of those presents ; but to prevent any

any misunderstanding between them, he at the same time entreated him to leave the country as speedily as possible.

The Spanish General returned the Cacique's civilities by different presents, consisting of apparel and other articles, which appeared to be very acceptable, and promised, conformably to his wishes, to set sail immediately; which he accordingly did.

Still coasting in the same direction, he disembarked on an island which lay at a little distance from the shore, where they also found the houses built of stone, and a temple. In the middle of this temple, which was open on all sides, an altar was raised, on which were placed different misshapen idols; and near it were extended the bodies of six men, who, conformable to the horrid custom of the country, had been sacrificed the night before. The impression this dreadful spectacle made on the minds of the Spaniards caused them to name the country the *Iste of Sacrifices*. They were soon confirmed in the opinion, that the inhuman custom of sacrificing men in honour of their idols reigned universally among this people; for, a short time after their departure from the *Iste of Sacrifices*, they cast anchor at another island

island called by the natives, *Kulua*, where they saw a still greater number of victims immolated. At the sight of such abomination there was not one, even among the Spanish soldiers, dull and brutish as were their ideas, that did not shudder with horror. Grijalva to the former name of this island added his own, Juan, which has by degrees been corrupted into *Sa. Juan D'Ulua*, its present name.

Wherever they landed they found abundance of gold, which, together with the fertility that was observed in passing the countries, inspired several with the idea of settling on this rich coast; but Grijalva, scrupulously observing the orders which had been given him by the Governor Velasquez, contented himself with simply taking possession, in the name of the King of Spain, of all the countries in which he landed.

In this manner he coasted till he arrived at the province of *Panuco*, the capital of a province so called, in *Mexico*, or *New Spain*; there, at the mouth of a river, he was attacked by a body of Indians with such fury, that he was constrained to make a dreadful slaughter among them. He would, then have continued

continued to explore the coast further ; but, alarmed at the violence of the contrary currents, he was forced to regain the road to *Cuba*. On his arrival the unjust and capricious Velasquez severely reprimanded him for not having profited by the favourable opportunity of founding a colony in so rich a country, although at his departure he had positively forbidden him to make any such attempt.

Theophilus. How ! This was, I think, extremely unjust in Velasquez.

The Father. He without doubt acted very absurdly ; but I am sorry, my children, to be under the necessity of informing you, that it is often thus in the world. Weak and wicked men not unfrequently lay to us, as crimes, our scrupulous exactness in fulfilling our duties ; but happy is it for us when we suffer on this account ; for then are we amply recompensed by the grateful testimony of a good conscience, and the joyful certainty that God, the eternal recompenser of good and ill, will approve what men condemn ; and what is the censure of men compared with the approbation of God and our own hearts ? I shall now conclude for to-day.

Nicholas.

Nicholas. I thought, my dear father, that you would have told us something about Cortez ; but we have not heard a word of him.

The Father. Were we going to represent a piece at the theatre, my dear Nicholas, what is the first thing that must be done ?

Nicholas. The curtain must be drawn up.

The Father. Certainly ; I have to-day therefore drawn aside the curtain of my history. To-morrow, Cortez, my hero, will appear on the stage.

DIALOGUE II.

THE FATHER.

WELL, my children, the curtain is now drawn, and my hero shall appear. Valasquez, at once ambitious, distrustful, and inconstant, resolved to prosecute the great discoveries made in his name, and to reap from them the advantages which they

they appeared to offer in such abundance. He equipped therefore with the utmost expedition ten vessels from twenty-four to an hundred tons burden.

Charles. Pray, father, what is meant by the word tons?

The Father. I am glad that by your question you give me an opportunity of explaining a term which is commonly made use of in the newspapers, and wherever navigation is spoken of. By the word *ton*, taken in this sense, mariners do not mean a tun or barrel of any kind, but a weight of two thousand pounds, or twenty quintals; so that, reckoning the quintal a hundred pounds, a vessel of a hundred tons signifies, in their language, a vessel that is capable of containing 200,000 weight. But to continue. Valasquez had not himself courage to head an expedition which promised to be attended with such toils and dangers; he was obliged, therefore, to give the commission to another: the question was, to whom? One appeared to him too cowardly, another too bold, another too shallow, another too wise and cautious.

Christian. But why too bold, or too wise and cautious?

The Father. He thought that a man of bravery and talents, after having made
valuable

valuable acquisitions, would soon grow weary of dependance, and think of throwing off the yoke of his dominion; and this was what his ambition could by no means brook; he was desirous therefore of finding one, who to the talents and courage necessary for the undertaking joined an entire devotion to his person, and a servile obedience to his orders; by whose means he should achieve great exploits, but who would leave him all the honour and profit.

Ferdinand. Upon my word, this was no bad scheme of Mr. Valasquez.

Henry. No? I think he acted very absurdly.

Ferdinand. How so?

Henry. Why, did he not at once show himself to be selfish, ambitious, and cowardly? If he wished to reap all the honour and advantages of the enterprise, surely he alone should have encountered the dangers and difficulties of it.

The Father. Henry is certainly right. Instead of searching for a man of servile character, he should rather have fixed on one of tried probity, and have shared with him all the advantages of the enterprise; he would then have ensured success, and at the same time the duration of his power. Fortune threw
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in his way a man of this description, but he knew not how to make use of him.

Frederic. Who was it, father?

The Father. He, who from the present moment will be the hero of my history.

The Children. Ah! Cortez! Cortez!

The Father. Himself. But it is necessary that I first bring you a little acquainted with him. He was of noble origin, born at *Medellin*, a little city of *Spain*, in the province of *Estramadura*. From his earliest youth he had discovered extraordinary courage, indefatigable patience in enduring fatigues, an active imagination, and an ardent desire to signalise himself by great actions. Such is the stamp with which young men are marked who mean one day to distinguish themselves from their fellows. Scarcely had he left school when he felt an irresistible desire to enter upon some career that should lead him to the paths of glory. At that time all eyes were turned toward the *West Indies*. He also directed his attention that way, and resolved to become the associate of those adventurous men, who despising toils and dangers, set out with the view of enriching their country by new possessions, and acquiring

honors to their country and to their names.

for themselves an honourable renown. He had just entered his twentieth year when he sailed from Spain for *St. Domingo*; and even in this, his first voyage, fortune put his courage and fortitude to a severe proof. Dangers accumulated upon dangers, and toils upon toils; but the brave and vigorous young man, the strength of whose body and mind is not exhausted by sloth, effeminacy, or dissipation, despises all. Labour is to him a pleasure; watching, hunger and thirst, mere trifles; nay, death itself, if needful, a matter of indifference, for what are all the crosses of life to a body animated by such a spirit?

Peter. Dear father, is it not time that I endeavour to become such a one?

The Children exclaim, And I also?

The Father. It certainly is: for, when the tree is once bent, the stem will never become straight and vigorous, nor will it ever elevate its head towards the clouds. It is the same with the young man, whose body or mind has in infancy acquired some evil bent or vicious habit: it is nearly impossible to be overcome, or at least requires a stronger exertion than common minds are capable of. Laborious indeed must it be for him to aspire at great or glorious actions;

actions; the unhappy propensities of youth will preponderate, and retard, if not totally prevent his rising to any meritorious distinction, confounding him among the ignoble crowd of worthless men, who leave the world without having performed the smallest action to make them remembered by posterity.

Mathias. Oh, that we could always bear in mind the good resolutions we form!

Frederic. Ah, brother, I wish we could.

Mathias. Many a time have I determined to become a great man, but before I was aware have forgot my resolution.

The Father. Since this is the case, a remedy must be contrived for what may become so fatal. I will prepare something that shall, at different times, in each day refresh your memory.

Nicholas. Dear! what can it be?

The Father. I will cause these words to be written on a board in large letters of gold, "*Think of the End;*" and this I will hang in our study exactly opposite the door, so that the words shall meet your eye whenever you enter; but you must promise me never to look upon them, without at the same time making this reflection—"*The end I propose is to become a wise and good man:* I ought therefore

therefore to exert all my abilities to acquire something useful, and to avoid every thing that may divert me from this great aim. Assist me, merciful Creator! with grace to remain true to my resolution." If you every day make these wise reflections, I may venture to promise you, my children, that you will advance rapidly in virtue, and that you will become wise, useful, and good men.

Theophilus. I wish the board were there now.

The Father. In a few days your wish shall be accomplished. We will now return to our narrative: Cortez arrived at *St. Domingo* at the time Ovando was Governor. In his stature tall, of an agreeable countenance, with a natural affability of manners, his exterior alone was sufficient to create an impression in his favour; but this was rendered still stronger by the excellent qualities of his heart and understanding: he was open, generous, and condescending, but at the same time wise, cautious, and discerning. In company he was cheerful, but never suffered his most lively sallies to lead him into an expression that should be prejudicial to any one; no one better knew how to turn a com-

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pliment, though he despised a servile adherence to forms and ceremony.

These excellent qualities soon gained him universal esteem. Ovando himself conceived an affection for him, and was desirous of detaining him at *St. Domingo*; but his adventurous spirit prompting him to aspire at greater actions, he obtained permission to accompany Valasquez in his expedition to *Cuba*. There he soon found an opportunity of manifesting his courage and great abilities, and rose so rapidly, that in a short time the important office of Alcade, or Chief Judge of *St. Yago*, the capital of *Cuba*, was confided to him. Such was the man to whom it was proposed to Valasquez to give the command of the fleet he had equipped; he approved the proposition, and the choice was made. All who had a part in the expedition were inexcessibly rejoiced to serve under a man so skillful, so brave, and so generally beloved. Cortez was himself transported with so fair an opportunity of bringing his talents into action, and with joy expended his whole property in procuring a greater provision of ammunition for war, and in assisting those who on account of their poverty were unable to defray the expence of their equipment. This generosity employed so opportunely, rendered

dered him entire master of the hearts of all who accompanied him; and the fleet being at length completely equipped, all the crew embarked. It consisted of three hundred Spaniards, and about two hundred of the inhabitants of the environs of *Cuba*, with some volunteers of the most distinguished families. The imagination of all these adventurers was fixed alone on the glory and immense treasures which they hoped to acquire in the expedition they had undertaken. The season and the winds were favourable. Cortez gave the signal to weigh anchor, and the fleet set sail the 18th of December, in the year 1518.

Ferdinand. Then it was just twenty-six years after the first discovery of America?

The Father. Exactly. The first place at which the fleet touched was *La Trinité*; from thence it sailed for the *Havannah*, in order to take in still more men and a further supply of warlike and other stores. *La Trinité* and the *Havannah* are ports of the isle of *Cuba*. Till the moment in which Cortez sailed, Valasquez had appeared perfectly content with his choice; although some who were envious of his reputation endeavoured to inspire him with distrust; but scarcely was he departed when every

thing appeared entirely different. "What," thought he, "should Cortez abuse the power that is confided to him! Should he no longer acknowledge my superiority, and render himself independant in the countries he is about to conquer in my name!" At this supposition his cheek was flushed with the glow of anger and indignation; and his agitated countenance too clearly betrayed what passed in his mind. The despicable parasites who secretly envied Cortez, did not fail to blow up the fire of suspicious jealousy that rankled at his heart. From this moment vexation and repentance preyed upon the narrow soul of Valasquez, and he dispatched to *La Trinité* an order to the Alcade to deprive Cortez, immediately on his arrival, of his letters patent.

Frederic. What do letters patent mean?

The Father. When any one is appointed to an office, an unsealed letter is given to him, in which the whole of his commission is noted down, and all that has been agreed on. This is called a letter patent.

Frederic. Thank you, my dear father.

The Father. The Alcade of *La Trinité* communicated the orders he had received to Cortez; but he unconscious of guilt in

in any respect, did not conceive it his duty to conform to them; and assured the Alcade that some misunderstanding must be the cause of so sudden an alteration in the sentiments of the Governor; he persuaded him, therefore, to defer the execution of the orders till an answer to a letter, which he should immediately dispatch to the Governor, could be received. The Alcade, who was not in a situation to execute his commission by violence, consented to the delay. Cortez then wrote to the Governor, and immediately sailed for the *Havana*.

Here he was obliged to remain some time, as well to take in the recruits he expected, as to embark other articles which appeared indispensibly necessary to an enterprise of this nature; especially a sort of cuirasses, composed of thick cotton. Cortez had chosen cotton in the first instance from a scarcity of iron; but he afterwards learnt from experience, that the cotton slightly quilted between two linens was a better guard than iron against the arrows and javelins of the Americans, as they not only lost all their force, but remained entangled at the point. The iron cuirasses on the contrary repulsed them, and by these means caused them to wound the person.

Thus to avoid the danger of being wounded by the arrows of the Indians, who

who stood next. This, together with the superior convenience of such light armour in a hot country, made it afterwards usually chosen by the European warriors who served in America. Thus it is that necessity has often given birth to the most ingenious and useful inventions. At length all was prepared.

—The whole Squadron consisted of eleven vessels; the largest of a hundred tons burden, not more considerable now than a small merchant ship, was chosen for the Admiral's vessel; three others were from seventy to eighty tons, and the rest were but small open boats.

John. Of how many tons burden are the merchant ships commonly that we now see in our ports?

The Father. From a hundred to five hundred; but there are of a thousand, nay of eleven hundred tons burden, which trade to the West-Indies, and which are as large as men of war.

Cortez's crew amounted to six hundred and seventeen men, of whom upwards of a hundred were sailors and mechanicks, and the rest soldiers. Of the whole number thirteen only were armed with muskets, and thirty-two with cross-bows, the rest had swords and lances; so limited was at that time the use of fire-arms. The principal part of the

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the armament consisted of sixteen horses, ten small pieces of cannon, which were then called field pieces, and four culverins, which are a sort of cannon very long and small, now seldom made use of. It was with this trifling armament Cortez set sail to make war in an unknown land, on a powerful King whose domains, united with those of his neighbours, were far more extensive than all the countries computed together that were then under the domination of the King of Spain. This King was the Sovereign of *Mexico*, of whose power and magnificence you will soon hear more.

Frederic. But what had he done to the King of Spain that he should make war upon him?

The Father. Nothing.

Frederic. Why then did he make war?

The Father. To become master of his treasures, cities, people, and country.

Frederic. The Spaniards were then robbers, father!

The Father. Nothing more, my dear Frederic.

Frederic. Oh, fye! I have done with Cortez. I thought he had been a generous, good man!

The Father. He was so in many respects. In those days such dreadful superstition

persecution reigned among men, that all who did not profess the Christian religion were not considered as beings of the same order, but as creatures deserving only of hatred, rejected by God, and destined to eternal torments. Upon this principle it was held as a very pious and praiseworthy action to persecute these unfortunate people, despoil them of their property, subject them to the yoke of oppression, and force them to embrace the doctrines of Christianity. Cortez, acute as his judgment was in other respects, was blinded by this absurd idea. He considered himself as an instrument in the hand of God to punish the infidels of America, and compel them to become Christians. Is it astonishing, therefore, that with such sentiments he should engage in the most unjust war that ever disgraced the annals of history, with as much facility as we would now enter the chace in pursuit of a hare or a fox. You see, therefore, my children, that it is possible for the same man to be at once a hero and a robber, generous and cruel, pious and inhuman! It is the natural effect of superstition. It never once occurred to Cortez, that it might be unjust to make war upon a people who could

and the voice of nature exclaim, "Is thy brother whom thou thus dearest, and who is thy Christian brother?"

could never have injured the Europeans, since they knew not that they existed. The misfortune of these poor people in never having heard that they had a Mediator, was a sufficient reason for persecuting and subduing them! Oh, that there had been one enlightened, one courageous friend to humanity, to have opened the eyes of the blinded Cortez, by thus addressing him——

“What art thou about, unhappy man? What has been the crime of these harmless people, in whose blood thou art about to imbrue thy hands? What injury have they done to thy King, or to thy Country? Is it a crime to disbelieve what is believed in Europe, if we have never heard that a Europe exists? Or are they not men because they are not Christians? Awake, Barbarian, and behold if they do not bear the form of man! Behold them trembling at the sight of thy armed assassins, and acknowledge that they are flesh of thy flesh, and bone of thy bone! Look at their faces, and see if thou canst not trace some family resemblance! When thou humblest the wretched Indian at thy feet, dost thou not feel a palpitation at thy heart, and hear from the inmost recesses of thy soul the voice of nature exclaim, “Tyrant, ’tis thy brother whom thou thus degradest, and who art thou? Christian

dost thou name thyself? the disciple of the mild Jesus, of him whose whole doctrine, whose whole life breathed only love? Art thou too the adorer of that merciful Being who causeth his sun to shine on the good and on the wicked, and his rain to fall on the just and on the unjust? Dost thou think, infatuated man! if it were the will of the all powerful God to punish the involuntary ignorance of this people, that he would have required thy arm? or that he would have appointed thee to discharge the function in his place? Would he have commanded thee to become the executioner, the assassin, of thy brethren? Go, wretched worm! and before thou attemptest to convert others to christianity by the sword, study the pacific spirit of that doctrine, which was not given to sow discord among men, to favour murder and war, but to unite all nations by the close ties of benevolence and love.

Had one been found to have spoken thus to Cortez, the mist with which superstition had enveloped his otherwise great soul might have been dissipated, and with the same zeal he employed in extirpating the suffering Indians might he have sheathed his sword, or have be-

come
degraded, and with
from

come their declared protector against the other bands of European robbers. But, as he had no friend who was not equally under the same influence as himself, his unawakened conscience, was silent, and the fate of the poor Americans was irrevocably fixed. But to proceed with our history: Valasquez, with the greatest vexation, understood, that notwithstanding his express orders to the contrary, Cortez had been suffered to depart from *La Trinité*: he accused of treason the officer who had been charged with the commission, and as his suspicions concerning Cortez now knew no bounds, he took the earliest precautions to prevent his escaping a second time, and departing from the *Havannah*. In consequence, he with all speed dispatched a confidential messenger to the Governor of that place, with strict orders immediately to seize the person of Cortez, and to send him prisoner under a good escort to *St. Jago*. Fortunately Cortez was apprized of the storm that threatened him time enough to provide for his safety. He immediately assembled all his men, of whose affection he entertained no doubt, and, disclosing to them his danger, requested that they would declare their sentiments respecting it. All were unanimous in exclaiming,

ing, that he ought not to perplex himself with the unjust caprice of the Governor, nor resign the command he had lawfully received, neither deliver himself into the hands of a judge as iniquitous as he was suspicious. They entreated, they conjured him not to deprive them, at the moment of embarking on so important an expedition, of a chief in whom they reposed entire confidence, and whom they were ready to follow till death, through all the fatigues and dangers they might encounter.

Cortez was soon prevailed on to grant that, to which his own inclination already prompted him; he therefore thanked the soldiers for the affection they discovered toward him, and ordered them immediately to weigh anchor and set sail.—And now, my children, let us also weigh anchor and steer toward the pavilion to partake of the rural supper that is prepared for us.

DIALOGUE

DIALOGUE III.

THEOPHILUS.

TO what part of the empire of *Mexico*, father, did Cortez flee?

The Father. He had resolved to follow exactly the same course as Grijalva had pursued before him: he sailed therefore immediately to the isle of *Cozumel*. A Spaniard having been formerly shipwrecked on that coast, and remaining still a slave to the Indians, his first object was to set him at liberty. This poor man was named Aquilar; and in the space of eight years which he had passed among the savages, he had entirely lost all traces of an European. He had so exactly contracted the colour, language, and manners of the natives, that it was with difficulty he was recognized for a Spaniard. He went naked as they did, his skin was tawny, and his hair, in the manner of the country, was twisted round his head. He bore an oar on his shoulder, had a bow in his hand,

hand, and on his back were a buckler and arrows. All his possessions consisted of a woven bag, containing his food, and an old prayer-book, which he frequently perused; but he had already so much forgotten the pronunciation of his mother tongue, that it was scarcely possible to understand him. According to his account, nineteen had at first suffered shipwreck in the environs of that coast; but seven had died of hunger and fatigue, the rest fell into the hands of the Cacique of the country, who immediately sacrificed five to his idols, and afterwards ate them; the remainder he confined in a sort of cage in order to fatten them, but they had the good fortune to make their escape. Desponding and without succour, their only resource then was to wander in the forests, subsisting on what herbs and roots they could find there. In this melancholy condition they were at length discovered by some Indians, who conducted them to another Cacique, an enemy to the former, who, except imposing on them daily a laborious task, treated them very humanely. Shortly after, all the Spaniards, except Aquilar and one named Guerrero, died. These had soon an opportunity of rendering the Cacique such signal services in war, that

that he conceived an extraordinary affection for them. Guerrero married an Indian woman of distinguished rank, and was soon raised to a command in the army; in short, he was by degrees become so much of an American, that on the arrival of the Spaniards he expressed no inclination to change his condition. He did not even once appear before them, withheld perhaps by shame; for, by the account of Aquilar, like a true Indian, he had pierced his nose, and painted the different parts of his body in the manner of the savages.

Cortez embraced poor Aquilar, and covered him with his own cloak, rejoicing greatly at the acquisition of so useful a person; for, as during his long residence in the country he had acquired a perfect knowledge of the language, Cortez conceived with reason that he would be of infinite utility to him in his negotiations with the Indians.

From Cozumel he proceeded to that part of the province of *Tobasco*, where the river *Grijalva* falls into the sea. Here he expected to have experienced the same reception as his predecessor, whose name the river bore. But in this he was deceived; for, at the sight of the Euro-

pean

pean vessels, the natives ran in crowds to the shore, and appeared resolute to oppose his descent. Aquilar was dispatched to make propositions of peace, but in vain; they would not even permit him to speak, and he returned without success. This incident was to Cortez as disagreeable as it was unexpected. His intention had by no means been to begin his conquests here. He wished on the contrary to gain as speedily as possible the coasts that lay nearest the centre of the Great Empire of *Mexico*, intending there to commence the projected attack. But he now found himself in the disagreeable predicament either of intimidating the savages by threats, or of beginning in this remote province a war, which, however successful it might prove, must necessarily cost him time and men, neither of which he could by any means spare. Yet to retire, he with reason feared would be considered by the Indians as a mark of cowardice, and would render them still more insolent and untractable; a circumstance which, after mature consideration, appeared to him of such importance, that he regarded it as indispensibly necessary to attack the savages. Night, which now began to approach, prevented the immediate execution of this design: the

the attack was therefore deferred till the next morning, and the interval employed in the necessary preparations.

At day-break all was disposed in order for battle. Cortez arranged his squadron in a semi-circle; and in this position, which the narrow banks of the river rendered judicious, he began to sail with the current; but before he came to action he resolved once more to attempt an accommodation, and for this purpose sent Aquilar to announce to the savages that it should still depend on them to appear as friends or enemies. Aquilar prepared to execute his commission; but the Indians, instead of listening to him, gave the signal of attack, and directed their canoes towards the European fleet. The Indians began the engagement by a shower of arrows and stones, which extremely annoyed the Spaniards, who nevertheless suffered them to proceed thus far without opposition; but Cortez now gave the signal of defence, and by a single broadside of his artillery put an end to the action. The Indians, stunned by the unexpected thunder which roared against them, and terrified at the effects it produced, leaped precipitately into the water, and exerted all their strength to escape by swimming. The Spanish vessels in the

mean

mean time gained the shore, and Cortez and his men disembarked without opposition: but all was not yet accomplished; the Indians who had escaped from their enemies had fled into a thicket, in which a much greater number of these savage warriors were assembled: these, while Cortez was engaged in arranging his men in order of battle, fell upon him. Their attack with arrows, javelins, and stones, mingled with their savage cry of war, was really formidable; but Cortez, perfectly unmoved, continued to form his lines till the whole corps was in complete order to engage; he then advanced courageously to the encounter, and with an admirable boldness pierced through their profound morasses and entangled forests, terror and death preceding him, and opening him a passage to innumerable swarms of enemies. An army of warriors in battle array, with European arms was a sight equally new and terrible to the Indians; they durst not wait the attack, but fled precipitately before them. Cortez fought at the head of his men with an heroic courage nothing could resist. In the beginning of the action he had left one of his shoes in the deep morass, by which he necessarily passed; and so much

much was his mind engaged in the action, that he was not sensible of his loss till after it was over. The enemy fled to *Tobasco*, a fortified place.

John. Fortified?

The Father. Yes; but it was a fortification consisting only of a range of stakes driven into the ground like our palisades, which surrounded the city in a circular form. Between this range, which was double, was a narrow path, which led to the city in a serpentine direction. Notwithstanding the imminent danger it threatened, Cortez hesitated not an instant to advance by this winding path; but on reaching the town, he found the entrance, as well as the streets, barricaded with stakes, and the inhabitants disposed to make head a second time. This new combat was soon also decided. The Indians were again repulsed, but not entirely subdued. They rallied in the square of the city; again attempted the most obstinate resistance, and were again routed. After this, they fled into the forests. *Tobasco* was taken, and the battle entirely ended.—Now, my children, inform me what have been your sensations during this recital? For whom have you been interested? Have you wished

wished the victory to the brave Cortez, or to the Americans?

Some of the Children. Oh, to the first, to be sure.

Others. Oh, fye! No, certainly to the latter.

The Father. Let us hear your reasons, Ferdinand; and you that are of his opinion, speak. Why do you take the part of Cortez?

Ferdinand. Because he fought with so much bravery.

Frederic. And because he would willingly have had peace, if the savages would have consented.

Theophilus. Yes; and beside this, he is our countryman.

Christian. And the history would probably have concluded, had Cortez been conquered or killed.

Henry. These are fine reasons indeed! Pray did not the Americans conduct themselves with equal bravery?

John. And did they come to invade the country of the Spaniards? Was it not rather the Spaniards who came to fall upon them?

Nicholas. And are not the Americans equally our brethren when they act with rectitude and justice?

Mathias. Christian, I think, has given a droll reason for his wishing success to Cortez.

Cortez. Was it necessary for the poor Americans to be killed, that our father might have something to recount to us?

Henry. For my part, I would rather the Spaniards had been repulled, even if the history had never been related.

The Father to Henry, John, and Mathias.
Well, my children, you have judiciously rectified the error of your brothers; but I must at the same time also say a few words in their justification. I dare answer for it that during the battle, and before we had time to reason upon the subject, we should all have been inclined to take the part of Cortez, and I fear the same will frequently happen as we proceed in the history. We shall often forget that our European countrymen are a band of robbers, and that, on the contrary, the poor Americans are the innocent and oppressed party; and, if the victory were in our power, should each time award it to the man for whom we have already conceived so great a predilection. Do not let this astonish you; the principle from which it arises is not absolutely bad; it is in the nature of the human mind to be interested for those who are remarkable for courage and extraordinary exertions;

'Tis

'Tis true we ought to consider to what purpose this courage is employed, and what is the end of these exertions; but in the warmth of our admiration we commonly forget this; and hence it occurs, that we are frequently forced, upon cool reflection, to abandon with horror the interest we have embraced. Thus, my children, it happened with your brothers, when inclined to favour Cortez and his banditti: the extraordinary courage and perseverance of the Spaniards in surmounting the obstacles they encountered, were alone present to their imagination; they were far from thinking of the innocence of the Americans, or of the natural right they had to drive from their lands rapacious strangers, who presented themselves sword in hand. But now that I have pointed out all this, I am convinced they will form a different judgment. Is it not so, Christian?

Christian. Certainly, father. But what I said was only in jest.

The Father. I am sensible it was:—but we will now return to *Tobasco*. Cortez did not permit his soldiers to pursue the Indians in their retreat; and in this I distinguish the man whom thirst of blood had not induced to become the oppressor of his fellows, but who was hurried

hurried on by the false opinion that he was doing his duty. The booty was beneath the expectation of the Spaniards; the Indians having carried off into the woods all that was valuable, leaving only a store of provisions, which came very *a-propos* to the weary and famished Spaniards. In the early part of the night Cortez stationed all his men in three temples, situated in the most elevated parts of the city, and took care to place sentinels to secure them from all nocturnal surprise. He himself several times went the round: that is to say, he went to see that the sentinels he had posted did their duty. Towards morning he caused the environs of the woods to be visited, but none of the Indians were either to be heard or seen.

This appeared suspicious; and in consequence he dispatched spies into the more distant districts, who returned with the disagreeable intelligence that they distinguished an innumerable body of the natives, whom they estimated at not less than forty thousand, who were apparently preparing to renew the attack. Situated as Cortez then was, this news would have been sufficient to intimidate the most courageous; for what was not to be expected

pected from a body almost an hundred times superior in number, composed of men driven to the last extremity, and reduced to the necessity of fighting for their country, their temples, their lives, and their liberty? Cortez felt the danger of his situation in its fullest extent; but, entire master of his passions, he assumed an air as tranquil and serene as if the matter in debate had been a mere trifle. His example inspired his men with equal intrepidity, and they joyfully followed their leader into a place where he chose for them a post, the most advantageous relative to their small number.

Here Cortez arranged his little army in order of battle at the foot of a hill, the height of which defended them from an attack behind, while from the summit he could play off his artillery with the greater freedom and effect. He himself retired with his cavalry into an adjacent wood, that he might from thence at a proper opportunity fall unawares upon the enemy. Thus arranged, in formidable silence they expected its approach.

At length it appeared.—But, that you may form a lively idea of the manner in which the people of America made war, I will, before I proceed, give

give you a circumstantial detail both of their equipment and of their conduct during a battle.

The greater part of them were armed with bows and arrows. The bow-strings were made of the entrails of beasts, or of the hair of deer twisted, and the arrows of strong fish-bones pointed. Their javelins were formed either to lanch afar, or to be used as swords in closer encounters ; but one of their most formidable weapons was a sabre, made of hard wood, the edge of which was composed of sharp stones, and so weighty, that, like a hatchet, both hands were necessary to make use of it. Some among them also carried clubs ; others slings, with which they had the art of hurling large stones very dexterously and with great effect.

The chiefs alone made use of defensive arms, which consisted of a quilted cotton cuirass, and a buckler of wood, or the shell of the tortoise. The rest were quite naked ; but to give them a terrific air, they painted their faces and bodies of various colours, and, to add to their stature, wore upon their heads a bunch of large feathers.

Their martial music agreed with their equipment. They used a flute made of reeds, and large shells for their wind in-

struments, with a drum formed of the trunk of a tree hollowed. The art of combating in close ranks was absolutely unknown to them ; but they observed a certain order in dividing their army into small parties, of which each had its chief. They had also in common with the Europeans the method of not leading all their forces at once into the field, but of reserving a part for a resource ; or to speak in the military language, for a *corps de reserve* to come as necessity required to the assistance of those who were foremost.

Their first attack was accompanied by a horrible and excessively piercing cry ; but if it happened that the enemy sustained this onset, and succeeded in throwing the first ranks that advanced into disorder, and making them give way ; then, on account of the press and confusion, the whole army was in a few minutes routed, and a general flight ensued. Such was the enemy that the Spanish corps saw advance towards them in numerous battalions. Firm and unmoved, the little army of Europeans expected the attack in silence. They were already advanced within bow-shot, and began the combat by a horrid cry, and a shower of arrows which

which obscured the air. The Spaniards answered them by the thunder of cannons and muskets, which soon thinned the battalions of the enemy; but the intrepid Indians, far from being intimidated, with shouts of defiance filled up the breaches they had made. They threw sand into the air, by a cloud of dust, to conceal their loss, and, drawing their arrows, rushed with ardour into the thickest of the battle. The Spaniards did their utmost to resist the superior force of the enemy; but their fury, and the numbers that advanced close upon each other, rendered it impossible long to resist. Their ranks were already broken in several places, and seemed the dreadful prelude of an entire defeat, when on a sudden Cortez issued from the wood at the head of his cavalry, and fell upon the centre of this formidable multitude. This was a spectacle equally new and terrible to the poor Indians, who had never before seen men on horseback. They were immediately struck with the idea that usually prevailed, viz. that the two composed only one monster, half man and half beast; and so great was the surprise it caused, that their weapons fell from their hands. This gave the Spaniards time to rally, the fire of the

artillery became fiercer, and the poor Indians, pressed on all sides and half dead with terror, fled in disorder.

Cortez, satisfied with having a second time shewn his superiority, immediately gave orders for the slaughter to cease: contenting himself with causing some of the fugitives to be taken alive, in order to make use of them in concluding a peace with the whole nation. Eight hundred Indians were left dead on the field of battle, while the Spaniards lost only two men; but there were seventy wounded. The number of the wounded among the Indians could not be ascertained, all those who had strength sufficient having fled.

The next day Cortez caused some of the prisoners to be brought before him: terror and anguish were impressed on their countenances, each expecting to hear his sentence of death pronounced; but what was their joy and surprise, when the Spanish General received them with the utmost kindness, and announced to them by Aquilar that they were free! Their transports were still further increased, when Cortez to this unexpected pardon added a present of European baubles, which he knew would please them. Frantic with joy, they
hastened

hastened to inform their companions how generously they had been treated; and what is commonly the consequence of generosity and kindness followed, viz. the gaining of those hearts which were but a short time before filled with rage and vengeance.

Full of confidence and good-will, several Indians came down soon after to bring them provisions, and were magnificently rewarded. The Cacique himself sent ambassadors with presents to demand peace, which was readily granted; and as he came shortly after in person, it was confirmed by reciprocal presents, which were agreeable to both parties. Among others, the Cacique sent Cortez twenty young girls, who were acquainted with the art of making the Indian bread. One of them, who was afterwards baptized by the name of Marian, was the daughter of an Indian Cacique. She had been forced from him in early youth, and had afterwards been sold to the Cacique of *Tobasco*. This young Indian united to great beauty and extraordinary talents; and as she in a short time acquired the Spanish language, she rendered great services to the Spanish.

nish General in his negotiations with the Mexicans.

It is said that Cortez from gratitude married her, and that they had a son named Martin Cortez.

While the Cacique and the principal Indians were conversing with Cortez, the horses of the Spaniards were heard to neigh: this alarmed the Indians, who inquired with terror what those formidable powers (meaning the horses) would have? The Spaniards replied, that they were enraged with them for not having punished the Cacique and his people for their presumption in having opposed the Christians. Scarcely was this answer given, when, with the view of effecting a reconciliation with these tremendous creatures, they ran and brought quilts for them to repose on, and a variety of poultry to regale them; humbly asking pardon for their offence, and promising thenceforth to acknowledge the superiority of the Christians.

The Spaniards then made preparations for their departure, still continuing in the resolution of advancing toward the western coast of the country. Tomorrow, if the wind be favourable, we will attend their departure.

Peter.

Peter. What wind was necessary to them, father.

The Father. Now what wind do you think was necessary?

Peter. A wind from the East.

The Father. Well then, imagine yourselves in the situation of Cortez. Look well to the vane, and tell me when the wind, which is now in the West, shifts to the East; for till then I shall proceed no farther with my history; I am resolved, like Cortez, to remain at anchor.



DIALOGUE IV.

THE young folks who knew it was useless to dispute any resolution which their father had once formed, often turned a wishful look toward the vane, to see if the wind shifted toward the east, since that was the period he had fixed

fixed for the exercise of their patience ; but, alas ! it continued long in the west, and consequently their entertainment was suspended.—“ This is just as we were served at Copenhagen,” said John, alluding to an excursion they had made a few months before with their father, and in which they were for some days weather-bound. “ How vexatious that the wind does not change !”—“ and this, my dear boy,” said the father, who overheard the exclamation, “ is exactly what will often happen to you in your progress through life. You must not always expect favourable gales ; your most ardent wishes will be often disappointed. When chance therefore affords you an opportunity of exercising so necessary a virtue as patience, consider it as a peculiar advantage, and fail not to profit by it ; for, be assured, my children, very often in your intercourse with mankind will you have need of it. Woe be to those who neglect the culture till the moment in which the practice is become necessary ? Patience, young citizens of the world, remember patience ! which must assist your navigation on the ocean of life. Be assured that there are many calms, tempests, and contrary winds, which will retard your progress, cause you to deviate from your course, strand your bark

bark on dangerous quicksands, and even shatter it among rocks. Therefore, once more remember patience; and may the trifling vexation you now suffer from the continuance of the westerly wind, prepare you all to endure greater, should occasion require!"

During several days after, the wind continued to blow without interruption from the west, and the narrative was still delayed. At length one morning between five and six o'clock, just after their father was risen, those among the young people who were the most impatient to hear the history, and who had for several days risen earlier to examine the wind, rushed into his chamber, and almost stunned him with the cry of "An easterly wind! An easterly wind!" In vain did he entreat them to spare the drum of his ears, for which he was seriously alarmed. No quarter was given; they laughed, they jumped, they sung, till self-defence obliged him with the loss of one of his slippers, to follow them into the meeting parlour, where he seated himself, and, having rubbed his eyes, which were yet scarcely open, began as follows:

"Rejoiced at the success of a war, which might have been attended with the most fatal consequences, and in-

spired with the hope of being equally fortunate in his other enterprises, Cortez, with his victorious army, quitted the province of *Tobasco* to proceed in his perilous career. All having re-embarked, they weighed anchor; a fresh gale from the east filled their sails, and the squadron steered to the westward."—Here their father rose, and, making a profound bow to his young auditors, without uttering a word withdrew to his chamber to finish dressing himself. In vain did they entreat him to return, and even some of them ran after him to bring him back. "You had certainly," said he, "a right to exact the performance of my promise; but I promised nothing more than to let the Spaniards depart as soon as we should have an easterly wind. I have kept my word, and you have a right to exact no more: suffer me now to be as punctual in my promise, as you have been in maintaining your rights. In the evening I will continue." With these last words he left them; and, as reason was evidently on his side, no one had courage to reply. Each had therefore recourse to patience. Evening at length arrived, to the great satisfaction of his young auditors, when their father without further preamble began in these words:

Cortez

Cortez in this second voyage visited all the places at which Grijalva had before touched. He also at length arrived at the isle of *St. Juan de Ulua*, of which I lately spoke, and caused his squadron to cast anchor between that island and the main land. He had not continued there long before two pirogues or Indian barks, made simply of the trunks of large trees, approached. The Indians who were in them, and who appeared to be of consideration, showed neither defiance nor fear, and Cortez received them on board his vessel with every mark of amity. On their beginning to converse, Cortez expected to hear their propositions from his interpreter Aquilar; but was much disappointed to find that he understood not one word of the Mexican tongue, which was spoken by these Indians; and they on their part were entirely ignorant of that of *Yucatan*, the two languages being totally different. This was an unlucky circumstance for Cortez: he nevertheless remarked with great joy that one of the *Tobasco* slaves named Marian, she of whom we have before spoken so highly, entered into earnest discourse with some of the Indians; and he soon found that this young woman, being born in a province of the Mexican Empire, and
-after

after her captivity having been carried to *Yucatan*, spoke with equal facility the language of both countries. Negotiations therefore immediately commenced. Marian addressed the Mexicans in their own tongue, and communicated the substance of their propositions in the *Yucatan* language to Aquilar, who, thus informed, conveyed it to the General in Spanish.

Thus it was necessary on both sides for explanations to take place in three different languages before they could render themselves intelligible. Cortez at length, by these indirect means, understood that Pilpator, Governor of the country, and Teutile, General of the Great Emperor Montezuma, had commissioned these Indians to inquire with what intention he was come thither, and to offer him the succours he had occasion for to proceed on his voyage. I conclude it is unnecessary to point out to you, that the style of this address bespoke a people very different from all the savage tribes they had hitherto encountered in the West Indies. Cortez felt the difference, and replied in the most polite and gracious terms, that he was come with the amicable intention to bring the chief of their nation tidings that would prove interesting to the whole

whole country. He then sent back the ambassadors loaded with presents, and immediately, without awaiting their return, began to disembark his men, horses, cannon, and all his artillery of war. The peaceable inhabitants of the district ran in crowds to lend an assisting hand to those who were soon to become their oppressors, and to construct for them cabins of the branches of trees. Oh! that their tutelary angel had disclosed to them the future, and shown them the return they would one day meet for the hospitable assistance they now pressed forward with such haste to give! How would they have shuddered before these wolves in sheep's clothing, and have exerted their utmost efforts to have driven them from their coasts! But Providence, whose designs are impenetrable, had decreed that these unfortunate people should bend beneath the European yoke. The reason is only known to Him who governs the universe with a goodness and wisdom that is unchangeable, and who suffers a small evil that unmeasurable good may soon or late accrue from it. Sensible of our own littleness, it is our part to adore in silence. The next day Pilpator and Teutile appeared in person with a numerous

merous suite of armed Mexicans. Their equipage was magnificent, and conformable to the majesty of a powerful Sovereign. Cortez thought it policy to make on his side as much parade as circumstances would admit, to inspire the Mexicans with a high opinion of him, and of the Potentate whose ambassador he announced himself. In consequence he ordered his foldiers to remain near him with all their military pomp, and to keep a respectful silence. After this he received the Mexican grandees with an air of dignity calculated to command respect: to the questions they put to him, he replied with brevity and an affected haughtiness, that he was come from Charles of Austria, the great and powerful Emperor of the East; that this Monarch had charged him with propositions to the Emperor Montezuma, which required a personal interview, and that he desired to be conducted to him.

As some among you have not yet studied modern history, it is necessary that I inform you who Charles of Austria was, whom Cortez called Emperor of the East. You recollect that at the time of Columbus, Ferdinand the Catholic reigned in Spain. This Ferdinand had no son, but a daughter named Jane, married

married to Philip, an Austrian prince. She had a son called Charles, the same who is alluded to by Cortez ; for on the death of Ferdinand, King of Spain, Charles his grandson being the next heir to the throne was crowned, and thus united Spain to the sovereignty of the Netherlands, which he had possessed since the death of his father. He was afterwards even created Emperor of Germany, and thus became one of the most powerful princes that had ever reigned in Europe. He was commonly called Charles the Fifth, because he was the fifth of that name that had possessed the Empire of Germany. As you will now understand of whom Cortez is speaking, I may continue my narrative. The resolute declaration of the Spanish General threw the Mexican grandees into visible embarrassment, as they were sensible that the request which Cortez made of an interview with the Emperor Montezuma would be extremely disagreeable to the latter.

John. Why so?

The Father. From the first appearance of the Europeans on the coasts of Mexico, Montezuma had experienced the utmost inquietude, chiefly on account of an ancient tradition, which prevailed in that country, intimating that toward the

the east lived a formidable people, who sooner or later would come and overthrow the Empire of Mexico, and render themselves masters of it. It is not easy to discover from whence such a report could arise; but certain it is, that this ancient prophecy had overwhelmed the superstitious Mexicans and Montezuma himself with the most serious apprehensions. On this account the demand of Cortez, to be conducted to the capital of the Emperor greatly embarrassed the envoys. However, before they replied to this disagreeable request, they endeavoured to obtain the goodwill of the General by considerable presents. Cortez expressed his satisfaction, and they then took courage to declare to him that it was impossible they could acquiesce in his demand. But what was their astonishment when Cortez, assuming an austere countenance, replied with an air of authority, that he was absolutely obliged to persist in it, since he could not possibly return to the great and powerful Monarch whose ambassador he was, without having executed the orders with which he was charged. This was more than they expected; and they had no other alternative than to entreat Cortez to wait till they had informed the Emperor Montezuma of his intentions,

intentions, and were acquainted of his pleasure upon this subject. This was agreed to.

Mathias. And did the Mexicans really give Montezuma the name of Emperor?

The Father. No, certainly, Mathias; for in that case they must have spoken the same language as their visitors, English. They called him in the Mexican language, their Sovereign Lord, their Master, and their absolute King; but the Spaniards, as he was so great and powerful a prince, gave him the title of Emperor, to which they had been for some time accustomed, as Charles the Fifth, their King, was, as before observed, also Emperor of Germany. During this conversation, artists in the suite of the Mexican Lords were busy in designing on pieces of white cotton every thing remarkable that they had an opportunity of observing among the Europeans. Cortez understanding that their designs were to be sent to the Emperor, resolved to exhibit objects still more interesting and capable of making a more powerful impression on the heart of Montezuma. With this view he caused his whole military corps to place themselves in battle array, and presented to the astonished

nished Americans the tremendous and magnificent representation of a battle in the European manner. The Indian spectators were seized with such terror, that some fled, others in the greatest agitation threw themselves on the ground, and it was with the utmost difficulty others could be persuaded that what they heard and saw was merely a sport exhibited to entertain them.

Now it was that the artists had need of their utmost skill to represent all the horror and destruction of the European tactics, of which they were living witnesses. They delineated with a trembling hand; and the relation, with some European trifles, was conveyed by swift couriers to Mexico, the capital city, to be transmitted to the Emperor; for throughout the country, from the most distant province to the capital, were stationed at certain regulated distances well exercised messengers, by whose means the Emperor might, in a very short time, be informed of all that was passing in the different parts of his extensive domains.

Peter. How far from Mexico was the place where the Spaniards then were?

The Father. Above an hundred and eighteen

eighteen English miles. How many German miles does that make?

Peter. Oh, that is not difficult to compute.—Four times four in eighteen, and two remain—five times four in twenty—forty-five German miles.

Theophilus. Then four English miles answer to one German?

Peter. You are right, child; but remember, that in this calculation the German as well as the English mile is taken in its most limited extent. Otherwise, we commonly reckon five.

Theophilus, ironically. Upon my word, Sir, you speak very learnedly.

John. But does the gentleman know what makes a French mile?

Peter. That is to say, a league.

John. Yes.

Peter, reflecting. A league—We were not talking of that.

John. Defeated! defeated!—Come, Mr. Pedant, confess yourself conquered, and learn that a league and a half make a German mile.

Peter. True, true, as I said, or rather as I did not say, a league is something more than half a German mile.

Ferdinand. What everlasting babblers! For goodness sake, peace; and do not interrupt the history.

The Father. The couriers, as I have told

told you, departed: in a few days they returned with the Emperor's answer, which was, as Cortez expected, a denial to his request; but to soften the disagreeable impression this refusal might make, Montezuma accompanied it with presents truly worthy of a King. Pilpator and Teutile were charged with this disagreeable commission; but they wisely began the negotiation by the delivery of the presents, with the view probably of preparing the mind of Cortez to receive the refusal in good part. The presents, borne with great solemnity by a hundred Indians, were deposited upon mats at the feet of Cortez, and immediately riveted the attention of the avaricious Spaniards, who were inexpressibly astonished at a specimen of riches so far surpassing all their most extravagant hopes had represented of the treasures of the country. On one side were calicoes equaling silks for the fineness of the texture; on the other representations of animals, trees, and other natural objects, wrought so skilfully in feathers of various colours, that they might easily have been mistaken for paintings. There were also bracelets, necklaces, and other trinkets, wrought in solid gold with the utmost skill and elegance. But

as

as the sun obscures the brightness of every other object, all these precious articles were eclipsed by two large orbs, one of massive gold representing the Sun, and the other of silver portraying the Moon; and as if they were resolved to omit nothing that might inflame the cupidity of the Spaniards, among other things were found several boxes filled with precious stones, pearls, and gold dust, like that found in the rivulets of the country, or in the mines.

Cortez accepted these magnificent gifts in a manner that testified great respect for the Emperor, after which, the envoys acquitted themselves of the disagreeable part of their commission. They declared in the name of their master, that they could not grant an entry into the capital to foreigners, nor permit them a longer sojourn in the Mexican Empire; they therefore prayed them to hasten their departure.

How just and reasonable soever this request, Cortez did not assume an air of less displeasure, and affirmed, still more imperiously than before, that his own honour and that of his King, absolutely forbade him to accept this refusal, or to return until he had the interview he demanded with the Emperor.

Nothing

Nothing could exceed the surprise of the Mexicans, accustomed to the most abject submission towards their princes, to hear with what audacity this extraordinary man insisted on what had been absolutely refused by their Sovereign. Such a presumption was in their eyes an abomination so unheard of, that it was some time before they recovered from their astonishment. At length recollecting themselves they entreated the presumptuous European, who appeared to them more and more formidable, to grant them a delay of some days, that they might convey advice to the capital of his unexpected perseverance in his demand. Cortez consented to this new delay, but on condition only that he should wait no longer than the stipulated time for an answer.

Whatever resolution and courage Cortez might display in the whole of this negotiation, he could not in reality be free from uneasiness. Every thing convinced him that he had to do with a very powerful and well governed state; and it appeared to be the utmost temerity to attempt the overthrow of so mighty an empire with a handful of Spanish adventurers. He did not however persevere the less steadily in his plan, resolved to hazard this daring enterprise, whatever

whatever it might cost him. To this he was impelled by two reasons. The first was religious zeal, which induced him to believe he should further the views of Heaven in subduing an idolatrous nation, and forcing them to become Christians. The second arose from his own critical situation; for, after what had passed between Valasquez and him on his departure from Cuba, he could have no hopes of remaining unpunished on his return. His life therefore being in danger, he preferred risking it in an enterprise of this nature, to exposing himself to the danger of losing it on his return to Cuba by the hand of the executioner. Unfortunately, in his army were some who experienced reflections equally uneasy upon the subject of the approaching expedition; and these were the very people who in their hearts espoused the cause of Valasquez. They therefore exerted their utmost efforts to inspire the whole army with their own doubts and fears, with the view, if it were possible, of exciting a general insurrection, and forcing their commander to return to Cuba: but in this they failed, the greater part being too strongly occupied with the idea of the immense treasures which they hoped to possess, for any thing to divert them from their purpose;

purpose ; besides which, they thought there was reason to expect an answer from *Mexico* conformable to their desires.

The ambassadors at length returned, but with an answer by no means favourable to the wishes of the Spaniards ; for, whatever might be the terror with which the obstinacy of Cortez had impressed Montezuma and his Council, they took the manly resolution of persisting in their refusal and keeping the importunate Europeans at a distance. Teutile was the bearer of this unwelcome message, which was again accompanied with the most considerable presents.

In this interview Cortez thought it advisable to waive something of his former haughtiness : he replied therefore, with an air of great composure, that the Christians held it as a duty to instruct their fellow-creatures in a religion that would teach them the way to happiness ; that his Sovereign had sent him to draw the Emperor of Mexico and his subjects from an error in which he could not without compassion behold them ; that to effect this, an interview with the Emperor was necessary, and that in consequence he must still continue to urge his demand till it should be

be granted. Teutile, burning with rage and impatience, having with difficulty attended to the end of this palliative address, rose with indignation, and replied, that since he saw amicable expostulations had no effect, they must have recourse to more efficacious means to enforce the orders of his master. With these words he hastily withdrew his suite; the Mexicans who were in the camp of the Spaniards immediately followed, and in a short time the adjacent country was entirely forsaken by its inhabitants.

This was more than Cortez expected; he was struck with astonishment, but his companions still more so. With heavy hearts they foresaw the fatal consequences to which this incident might lead; and the least evil they expected was a total want of provisions, which the hospitable inhabitants, till now, had abundantly provided for them. The male-contents of the army profited by the general discouragement that prevailed, and endeavoured to force the General to regain the roads of *Cuba*. They now ventured to exclaim loudly against him, accused him of weak temerity, and excited their comrades no longer to suffer him to conduct them in

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an enterprize that must end in their destruction.

Cortez, who to an astonishing courage united a circumspect prudence, which often degenerated into cunning, by means of his confidants founded the general sentiments of the army; and hearing with pleasure that the clamours of the seditious, the secret partisans of Valasquez, made but a slight impression on the greater part of the soldiers, he assembled the principal authors of the revolt, among whom was one called Ordaz, and, addressing them with an air of composure and affability, requested their sentiments upon the measures he should pursue. Far from disguising them, they insisted unanimously that there was nothing left but to embark as soon as possible for Cuba.

Cortez heard them with the utmost calmness, and then replied, that for his own part he could not perceive the dangers with which they alarmed themselves, but that his design was by no means to force them to follow him against their inclinations; what they wished therefore should be done. He then immediately caused it to be published throughout the camp, that every one should prepare himself to re-embark
and

and sail for *Cuba*. Cortez had clearly foreseen the consequences of this proclamation. The Spaniards, whose ideas from their first descent on this coast had been fixed invariably on the treasures they had in view, were thunderstruck upon hearing that they must at once relinquish the flattering hope of possessing them; and that, without having reaped the least reward for the fatigues they had till now endured, they must return to their homes poorer than they had left them. They could not endure this reflection, great as had before been their discouragement, and a murmur of discontent on the capriciousness of their commander soon pervaded the whole camp. Cortez, transported with the success of his stratagem, heard their reproaches with pleasure, as he foresaw they would be the means of accomplishing his design. He even took measures to increase the discontent of the soldiers through his confidants, who complained still more loudly that from mere cowardice he wished to stop them in the high road to honour and riches. The result of this manœuvre was a tumult among the soldiers, all demanding with ungovernable fury that their general should appear before them. This was what Cortez desired;

and he immediately presented himself, feigning the utmost astonishment. All unanimously reproached him with having despaired of the success of an enterprise which would visibly extend the true religion, and procure their country the greatest honour and advantages. To this they added, that as for themselves they were firmly resolved to proceed to the end of the glorious career in which they had embarked, and that they should choose another commander, if cowardice induced him to forsake them.

How grating soever were these expressions in the mouth of subaltern officers, they were pleasing to him to whom they were addressed. Cortez, perfectly versed in the art of dissembling, still counterfeited the utmost astonishment, and seemed with difficulty to recover from it. At length he verbally expressed his surprise, and assured them that it had never once entered his thoughts to abandon hopes which appeared equally dazzling and well-founded; but that, as it was represented to him that the whole army were discouraged, and insisted upon returning, he had, against his inclination, taken the resolution of complying with their desires. His soldiers, re-animated

mated with this discourse, here interrupted him, and exclaimed with one voice, that he had been deceived; that a small number of poltroons had falsely attached their cowardice to the whole army, "but far be it from us," said they "to acknowledge as ours the sentiments of these pusillanimous wretches;" that, on the contrary, they were ready to expose their lives and to shed the last drop of their blood in the glorious enterprise upon which they had set out; that he might lead them whither he would; that they were firmly resolved to share with him every hardship and fatigue, and to follow him till death through all perils, however formidable they might be.

Cortez, in a manner that expressed joy, confidence and courage, praised the constancy of his soldiers, and promised to act conformably to their desires, since they were entirely consonant to his own; adding, that he would go immediately and make all necessary preparations for forming an establishment in the place where they then were, that they might afterwards penetrate into the heart of the country. Upon this resolution an universal exclamation of joy expressed the satisfaction of the soldiers.

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The last act of this comedy remained still to be performed. Cortez was in reality General, but he held his authority solely at the pleasure of those he commanded: this same power, therefore, which the soldiers arrogated in declaring him a second time their chief, might in other circumstances deprive him of his command. Such a possibility he sought to prevent, and the stratagem he made use of was this: he appointed a Court of Justice for the colony, composed of members whom he knew to be entirely devoted to his interest: this was scarcely established, and the new magistrates assembled, when Cortez appeared before them in the most respectful manner, his ensign of command in his hand. After having requested leave to make a proposition, he addressed them nearly in these words: "From this moment, gentlemen, I consider you as the representative of our sovereign monarch: your decrees, consequently, will to me be ever the most sacred laws. You no doubt feel how necessary it is that our army should be commanded by a general whose authority shall not depend on the inconstant will of the soldiery; mine absolutely depends on this; for, since the governor, Valasquez, revoked the commission with which he entrusted me, my pretensions

pretensions to the command are doubtless disputable. I hold myself obliged therefore, gentlemen, to remit into your hands a power, which is founded upon so dubious a right, and to entreat you in the name of the king, and pursuant to the power with which you are now invested, to appoint as commander the man who shall appear to you most worthy of this important post: for myself, I am ready as a subaltern, with my lance in my hand, to give my companions an example of the obedience due to him you shall lawfully elect for their general."

With these words, he respectfully presented his ensign of command to the president, and, laying his patent on the table, withdrew.

The judges continued the farce he had begun. They appeared to accept his dismissal, feigned a long deliberation, proceeded at length to a new election, and Cortez was a second time unanimously chosen commander. Upon this the troops were assembled; and the members of the court announcing to them the choice they had made, it was ratified by general approbation.—But before I suffer him to proceed on the most perilous enterprise that was ever resolved

resolved on, let me hear whether you will give him your vote also.—On this you may reflect till to-morrow.

DIALOGUE V.

JOHN.

WELL, dear father, we have reflected.

The Father. And what is the result ?

John. That Cortez shall remain general.

The Father. But the poor Mexicans ?

John. Nothing can be done for them, father, how disposed soever we may be to favour them. We have considered that there are absolutely no means left of saving them, since the Spaniards have discovered that they possess such immense

immense treasures; so that, should Cortez not subdue them, another would soon start up who might treat them with still greater inhumanity.

The Father. Unhappy country! thy fate is then decided; for Cortez, resolved on thy destruction, leads into thy peaceful bosom six hundred famished wolves, before whom the innumerable troops of thy naked children will be no more than flocks of defenceless sheep!

The new Court of Justice gave to the place where they designed to form a colony, before they advanced further into the country, the name of *Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz*, which is in English *The rich city of the true Cross*. They denominated this new town *rich*, because it was there they became acquainted with the wealth of the Mexicans by the superb presents they sent them, and because they hoped the treasures of this people would speedily centre there. They added the *True Cross*, because the day they disembarked happened to be Good Friday, the anniversary of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. This singular denomination of the first European colony settled at *Mexico*, is a striking monument of the leading passions

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which

which influenced the Spanish adventurers, viz. *avarice* and *religious zeal*; they burnt equally with the desire of filling their purses with gold, and Heaven with Christians. Thus it is that superstition commonly unites terrestrial with celestial things, cruelty with apparent humanity, an indulgence of the most shameful appetites with pretended piety. Oh that the happy time may not be far distant, when all that we call superstition or fanaticism shall be rooted from the heart.

Nicholas. But, my dear father, I cannot exactly comprehend the nature of superstition and fanaticism.

The Father. *Superstition*, my child, consists in believing of God, or of spiritual things, somewhat that is not founded on any rational principle; the persuasion of which is, perhaps, hurtful to ourselves or to others; for example, a belief in self-created phantoms, which have for existence no reasonable foundation, and which, in many circumstances, produce only terror and uneasiness to those who are impressed with it. *Fanaticism*, or *religious enthusiasm*, on the contrary, is that blind zeal, the object of which

which is to spread such superstitious notions, and force all mankind to believe them*. But to return—

Nicholas. Permit me, my dear father, before you begin, to ask whether the city which the Spaniards built is not the same spoken of in our geography under the name of *Vera Cruz*?

The Father. No, Nicholas, you will soon find that Cortez himself thought proper to transport the colony to another part of the country, which appeared to be situated more commodiously, named *Old Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz*, where he had resolved to fix his colony; but afterwards he removed some miles more to the South. But we will speak of this hereafter.

The Spaniards now prepared for their departure, and a lucky chance smoothed the way for them: Five Indians, sent as envoys from a certain Cacique whose dominions were not far distant, de-

* The limits of the present work not permitting the Author to enter into further explanations on this important subject, he entreats those parents and intelligent tutors who peruse this work with their pupils, to supply what he has left imperfect.

manded

ed an interview with the Spanish General; which being granted, Cortez, by means of his interpreters, gained the following agreeable information: that the Cacique of *Cempoalla*, their master, having learnt the great actions the Spaniards had performed at *Tabasco*, admired their valour, and in consequence was desirous of forming an alliance with them.

From several questions which he put to these envoys, he at length drew from them intelligence that gave him still farther satisfaction: this was no other than that Montezuma, to whom the Cacique of *Cempoalla* was subordinate, was as much hated as feared by his vassals on account of his pride and cruelty; that they were weary of bearing his yoke, and waited only for an opportunity to throw it off. Cortez could scarcely conceal the pleasure with which these tidings inspired him; he knew how easy it was to overturn the most powerful empire when once discontents arise between the sovereign and the subjects, and he no longer doubted the success of an enterprise which he before considered as extremely hazardous.

The envoys were overwhelmed with civility, both on their own and on their master's

master's account, and were sent back with the assurance that Cortez would soon pay him a visit.

To fulfil this promise, and at the same time to have an opportunity of examining a certain district which had been represented to him as more commodious for a settlement, he began his march, accompanied by his whole army, having ordered the fleet to sail along the coast till it reached the district spoken of. At the close of the first day they arrived at an Indian village, entirely forsaken by its inhabitants; all the houses and temples were empty, except that in the latter were some idols, the bodies of several men that had been sacrificed, and some books, the first that they had found in America.

Mathias. What, real books, father?

The Father. Doubtless not such as ours; but something that supplied the purpose of books. They were made of parchment, or skin prepared with gum, and folded in the form of leaves; different sorts of figures and significant strokes supplied the place of letters, and it was supposed that their contents related to the abominable worship of the Mexican idols.

The next day Cortez continued his march, but to his surprise found every place

place abandoned by its inhabitants, not one appearing although he was on the territories of the Cacique of *Cempalla*. This appeared suspicious; but toward the evening twelve Indians arrived, laden with provisions, sent by the Cacique, who requested the Spanish General to advance to his residence, which was not, the messengers said, more than a single sun's distance (meaning a day's march); and that there every thing would be ready for the reception both of him and his men. They were asked why the Cacique himself did not come to meet the General; to which they replied, that he was prevented by a certain infirmity. Six of these Indians Cortez sent back with thanks to the Cacique, and kept the rest as guides. The next day they came in sight of the city which was the residence of the Cacique. It was situated in a pleasant fertile district, and exhibited a most beautiful appearance. Some of the soldiers who were in the foremost ranks ran back to announce with joyful exclamations that the walls of the city were all of silver!

The Children exclaim, That must indeed have been beautiful!

The Father. They were not in reality of silver; they were only plaistered with
a lime,

a lime, so extremely white and shining, that the sun gave it a brilliancy that was easily mistaken by people whose thoughts were day and night wholly bent on gold and silver. Upon entering the city, they found the streets and squares filled with a prodigious concourse of people, whom curiosity had drawn from all parts; but they were unarmed, and were far less tumultuous than might have been expected from their numbers. They now approached the abode of the Cacique, and his Indian Highness at length appeared; when it was immediately understood in what the infirmity, which prevented his advancing to meet his guests, consisted; for his bulk was so enormous, that it was with the utmost difficulty, even with the assistance of some of his officers who dragged him forward, that he removed from the place where he was. This unwieldy size, together with his incapacity of moving or assisting himself in the most trifling instance, produced such an effect upon the Spanish soldiers, that it was with difficulty Cortez prevented them from bursting into a loud laugh, or indeed that he restrained himself within the bounds of gravity. As to his appearance in other respects, he was magnificently attired in a cotton cloak

cloak entirely covered with precious stones, and his nose and ears were pierced and ornamented with jewels. His reception of Cortez by no means agreed with his whimsical figure; his discourse was on the contrary extremely polite and intelligent; and he concluded with requesting his guests to come to his dwelling, that they might converse more at ease and without interruption on their common interests. The remaining part of the day was passed in repose from their fatigues, and in regaling upon the various fruits of the country that were furnished in abundance.

Cortez, in this interview with the Cacique, gave him to understand that he had been sent by the great Emperor of the East to destroy oppression, and put an end to tyranny in that part of the world. This explanation encouraged the Cacique to break forth into bitter complaints against the pride and injustice of Montezuma, whom he denominated a haughty and cruel tyrant, whose yoke had long been unsupportable not only to him, but to all his other vassals. During this discourse his sensations appeared so lively that he shed tears.

Cortez endeavoured to comfort him, and gave him assurances of his protection; adding, that the power of the tyrant

rant was the least of his uneasiness, since he knew it could not surpass his own, which had the support of heaven itself.

The next day Cortez with his whole army began his march to *Quiabiflan*, the country in which he had resolved to fix his establishment. Having crossed the most fertile plains and beautiful forests, after a short day's march they came in sight of the city of *Quiabiflan*, situated on an eminence and surrounded with rocks. The inhabitants had fled; but on arriving at the great square, about fifteen Indians advanced from a temple to salute the Spaniards, and assure them that their chiefs and all the inhabitants would return without delay, upon condition that he would promise to do them no injury. Cortez having given them the most sacred assurances, in a few minutes the Cacique returned, followed by all the inhabitants, who had concealed themselves from terror. Cortez perceived with pleasure that he was accompanied by the Cacique of *Cempoalla*, who as well as himself was borne on a litter.

Scarcely had the interview commenced when both broke into the most bitter invectives against the tyranny of *Montezuma*; and Cortez, who listened to these reiterated complaints with new pleasure, consoled

consoled them with assurances of his powerful protection.

In the midst of the conference several Indians entered, apparently in confusion, and whispered something in the ear of the two Caciques, which threw them into such consternation, that they retired in visible alarm. Cortez followed to learn the cause, and soon found that it proceeded from the arrival of six of Montezuma's officers, superbly clad, and attended by a considerable train of slaves bearing parasols of feathers over their heads.

In passing Cortez and his officers, the chiefs from Montezuma glanced on them a look of such contempt, that it was with difficulty the soldiers were restrained from falling upon them.

Marian, who had been sent to obtain information, returned soon after with tidings that the Mexican officers had summoned the two Caciques to appear before them, and had severely reproached them with having carried their perfidy so far as even to receive strangers, the declared enemies of their Monarch: that as a punishment for this treasonable correspondence, they were commanded, besides their ordinary tribute, to deliver twenty Indians more for a sacrifice to the offended divinities.

Cortez

Cortéz was incensed beyond measure at this information; but prudence urged him to restrain his resentment. He contented himself therefore with sending for the Caciques, and exhorting them not to execute the sanguinary commands of the tyrant, but on the contrary to arrest the bearers of so bloody a mandate, telling them that he would take the whole blame of the proceeding on himself. The Caciques, accustomed to an implicit obedience to the orders of their Sovereign, hesitated; but Cortéz, without giving them time for reflection, repeated his exhortation, or rather his commands, in so energetic a manner, that they had no longer courage to object; and the officers were accordingly arrested without the Spaniards appearing to have any hand in the affair. The Caciques once inflamed were for proceeding still further, and sacrificing the officers they had arrested in the place of those Montezuma had demanded; but Cortéz opposed this barbarity with the greatest horror, and ordered the officers to be guarded by his own men.

He was desirous, if possible, to avoid coming to open hostilities with the powerful Montezuma, and with this view resolved to have recourse to a stratagem which should induce him to believe,

lieve, that so far from being concerned in what had happened to his people, he was in reality an intercessor for them. Accordingly, during the night, he caused two of the prisoners to be brought before him, gave them their liberty, and ordered them to tell their master that he would endeavour to procure the release of their companions; after which he let them go. With respect to the Indians, his allies, the next day he made them believe that their prisoners had escaped from the guards during the night.

The Mother. How mean and despicable was this!

The Father. It was, indeed. It is probable Cortez would not have acted thus artfully, had he not been blinded by the gross error, that it is permitted to employ every means, even the most unjust, for the propagation of the Christian religion. He, in the mean while, found still other Caciques of the neighbouring mountains animated with equal hatred against their Emperor, and with the same desire of throwing off the yoke of his tyrannic power.

These chiefs of different Indian tribes, all bearing the general name of Totonagues, entered into a formal alliance with Cortez, renouncing the authority

city of Montezuma, and paying homage to the King of Spain as their only Sovereign.

They now turned their attention to the founding of a Spanish colony on a spot between *Quiabistan* and the sea; which on account of the fertility of its soil, its towering forests, and vicinity to the sea, appeared eligible for an establishment. It was named *Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz*; but now it is commonly by abbreviation called *La Vera Cruz*.

The Spaniards were universally obliged to assist in the work, and to labour at the construction of the walls and buildings of the new town. No one was exempt; Cortez himself was at the head of the workmen, and animated all by his example. By these means the works advanced with incredible rapidity; so that in a short time the place was enclosed and sufficiently strong to resist all the warlike machines of the Indians.

In the interval the two liberated Indians had arrived at the capital, and represented to Montezuma in glowing colours the good offices which (as they believed) Cortez had done them. This information somewhat appeased the rage of the Monarch, who, in the first heat
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of his resentment, had given orders for a powerful army instantly to march and exterminate by fire and sword both the strangers, and the Indians their adherents. Fear now again swayed the balance in his mind, and he resolved once more to try by gentle means quietly to rid himself of these troublesome and formidable intruders. A new embassy was dispatched with presents of immense value, and the care of them given to two princes, relations of the Emperor. They arrived at the camp just as the fortifications of the new town were completed; and, having remitted the presents they brought, thanked the General for the assistance he had given the Mexican officers, and concluded by requesting that he would depart from the dominions of their Emperor.

Cortez treated the ambassadors with the highest respect, and, before he gave any answer, caused the four prisoners to be brought and set at liberty. Then, by his interpreter Marian, he replied, "that he was sorry the Caciques, his allies, had displeased the Emperor by their imprisonment of his officers; but that he must of necessity confess that they had drawn the disgrace upon themselves by an inhuman demand, which he judged must have been made without the know-
ledge

ledge of the Emperor ; that it was his duty to declare to them, that the Christian religion held this barbarous custom of sacrificing human creatures in so great an abomination, that he felt it incumbent on him to use his endeavours to abolish it.—With respect to the Emperor, he had repaired the affront that had been given him by restoring the prisoners ; and that, as it was his duty to embrace the interests of his allies, he flattered himself that at his request he would pardon the Caciques of *Cempoalla* and *Quiabistan*, as he could do no less than take these vassals of the Emperor under his protection, they having to the utmost of their power endeavoured, by an amicable and hospitable reception, to obliterate the gross affronts he had experienced from Teutile.—To conclude, for what related to his departure, he had before had the honour of informing the Emperor, that a commission of the last importance imposed on him the obligation of not returning to his country till he had an interview with him, and that no dangers could deter the Spanish warriors from executing the commands of their Sovereign.”

The Indian ambassadors were struck with astonishment at the air of indifference and majesty with which Cortez delivered /

delivered this address. They returned full of admiration at his courageous resolution, and inspired with secret contempt for their own Sovereign, to whom they delivered an exact account of all they had heard and seen.

The new Spanish city was now in a state of defence, and Cortez prepared to march to the capital as he had purposed. Fortune seemed decidedly to declare in his favour; but his inconsiderate zeal for religion nearly destroyed all. News was brought, that in a temple of the Caciques, in alliance with him, preparations were making for a human sacrifice. Incensed at the barbarous superstition committed under his eye, he immediately repaired to the temple followed by some of his men armed, and threatened to destroy all with fire and sword if they did not that instant set the unfortunate victims at liberty.

Charlotte. In this, however, Papa, he did right.

The Father. Thus far he certainly did. But his zeal was not yet satisfied: he insisted likewise that the priests should destroy their idols, and for ever renounce their impious religion, although they were yet unacquainted with a better.—

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In this, I think, you will agree with me that he acted injudiciously.

Charlotte. Certainly.

The Father. The priests fell at his feet with cries and groans ; and the Cacique, trembling with apprehension, in vain interfered. As they refused to destroy these horrible idols, he ordered his soldiers to do it by force. The priests now called to arms, and in a few moments Cortez and his little band were surrounded by such a prodigious multitude of Indians, that it was sufficient to damp the most resolute ; but he, without betraying the least emotion, and with an air capable of inspiring terror, proclaimed aloud to the assembled multitude, that the first arrow they should presume to draw should cost the Cacique his life, and involve the whole nation in ruin. Marian interpreted these words in the language of the country, and the soldiers ran to execute the orders of their General. In an instant the largest and most deformed of the idols was rolled from the top to the bottom of the steps ; the others with the altars and sacred vases followed : every thing was devoted to destruction. The temple was then cleared and washed from the stains of human blood with which the walls were polluted, and an image of the Virgin substituted

tuted in the place of the idols. The astonished and terrified Indians expected to behold fire fall from heaven to revenge this profanation; but not perceiving a single spark descend, and the presumptuous destroyers of the temple continuing before them safe and in triumph, doubts arose in their minds; they began to reflect; and the end of their reflection was, a belief that the Spaniards also possessed a degree of divinity, which must be superior to that of their idols. This idea operated so powerfully, that without further deliberation they arranged themselves on the side of Cortez; and collecting the remains of the very images which had before appeared so sacred, they threw them with the utmost contempt into the flames. The temple was immediately converted into a Christian chapel; and that very day, in presence of numerous Indians, divine service according to the Roman manner was performed; a ceremony which was beheld with admiration by the Indians, though it was incomprehensible to them.

Nicholas. You said yesterday, father, that we could not comprehend why the Almighty permitted the downfall of the Empire of Mexico.

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The Father. I did so, Nicholas.

Nicholas. But it is now easy to discover the reason.

The Father. How so?

Nicholas. Why, father, the religion of the Mexicans being so abominable as to require the sacrifice of men, it is probable that God was pleased to abolish it, and for that reason permitted the whole Empire to be subdued by the Spaniards.

The Father. Your argument, dear Nicholas, appears to be reasonable; but without doubt Divine Providence had other views, which are at present unknown to us. Perhaps ages may elapse before they are explained; nay, it is perhaps in eternity alone they will be revealed. If the cause therefore you have assigned, Nicholas, be not sufficient, let us patiently await this distant developement, pre-assured that the Almighty in this, as in every other instance, is actuated by wise and merciful motives.

Scarcely had Cortez escaped the danger into which his precipitate zeal for religion had driven him, when another storm gathered over his head, and threatened to burst with equal violence. Among the soldiers and mariners were some who, weary with the many fatigues

they had endured, and alarmed at the prospect of the perils they must necessarily meet before they could reach the capital, had entered into a conspiracy against their commander. Their design was to seize one of the vessels, sail for Cuba, and carry tidings of Cortez to the enraged Governor.

Fortunately this plot was discovered before it was carried into execution. Cortez caused the bearer to be arrested, and punished as he deserved; but he at the same time saw clearly that the sedition in his little army was not by this measure effectually quelled; he feared it might again break forth, and this was to be prevented. Having revolved various measures in his mind, he at length fixed on a plan, certain it is true, but at the same time so hazardous, that a soul less daring than his own would have shrunk from it with terror. I should wish you, my children, to exercise your minds by guessing at the means he adopted, but that I am convinced you would in vain rack your invention; for, although you have on several occasions seen Cortez act boldly and courageously, it is difficult to conceive that he would, after mature reflection, stop at nothing less than depriving himself and his whole suite of all possible hope
of

of returning to Europe, and reducing himself and his people to the necessity of destroying the Empire of Mexico, or of paying the forfeit with their lives: Yet this was absolutely the project which he devised. He determined entirely to destroy his whole fleet, for the purpose of convincing even the most cowardly in his army, that, the means of flight being totally cut off, death or victory alone remained.

But if courage was necessary to conceive such a project, equal address was requisite to render the execution of it approved by the army. Fortunately Cortez possessed in an equal degree these two qualities of an elevated genius; hence what his courage had resolved, his prudence in the end happily accomplished. He began by causing the vessels to be unrigged——

Frederic. What does that mean, father?

The Father. Simply, that he ordered them to be cleared of the cordage and masts: the cannon, and every thing that could be carried out of them, was brought on shore. The carpenters then examined the hull of each vessel, and declared that they were so much damaged, that they looked upon it as impossible to repair them. Cortez now appeared, and by his eloquence inflamed the

the soldiers with such a military ardour, that they ran as if urged on by a natural impulse to destroy the vessels, their only resource in case of a failure in their expedition, dragging on shore the planks, beams, and every thing that remained.

One vessel only was kept entire, and for the following purpose: Cortez had, 'tis true, been confirmed in his dignity of General by the Court of Justice he had established, but in reality this signified little more than that he had conferred on himself that dignity. He was desirous therefore of having his right to the command established upon a more certain foundation, and with this view resolved to dispatch a vessel directly for Spain, to impress that Court with a favourable opinion of the steps he had taken; to engage the King and Queen to render him independent of Valasquez, and declare him Governor of the country he was attempting to conquer. The certain means of succeeding he well knew was to send the Government of Spain a considerable specimen of the treasures to be expected from the conquest of Mexico; but this specimen could not be rendered of importance without appropriating the presents that had been received from Montezuma; and in this case the consent of the soldiers,

diers, officers, and sailors, must be obtained, as it was necessary for each to forego his part. This was exacting a severe sacrifice; but Cortez nevertheless attempted it, and succeeded: every one resigned the portion that had been allotted him, ambitious of shedding his blood and even risking his life, amid a thousand fatigues and dangers; a circumstance which, when we consider the avarice of these rapacious men, is difficult to be paralleled in history, and at the same time proves the great ascendant Cortez had over the minds of his soldiers. He at length prepared to depart with his whole army, which was composed of five hundred foot, fifteen horsemen, and six field pieces. The remainder consisted only of about fifty men, nearly all invalids, and two horsemen, which were left to protect the garrison of *Vera Cruz*. The Cacique allies offered their forces for auxiliary troops; but Cortez accepted only of four hundred men, with two hundred *Tamenes* (or carriers) to bear the necessary burdens, and provisions for the army; for in that country, where neither horses nor any other beasts of burden were known, a certain class of men who bore the above mentioned name was employed to transport the necessary articles from

from one place to another. For the security of the Spaniards left in the garrison, Cortez made choice of fifty of the most considerable inhabitants of the country, who, without being sensible of their situation, served as Hostages.

Charlotte. Hostages?

The Father. Yes, Charlotte: those are called so whom we detain in order to oblige their countrymen to conduct themselves in the manner we desire, or to fulfil their engagements. Thus is the grand expedition against Mexico begun, and to-morrow we will follow the route of our bold adventurers: at present my lungs require a little respite.

DIALOGUE

DIALOGUE VI.

THE FATHER.

THE day on which Cortez with his little army departed for *Cempoalla* was the 16th of August, 1519. Nothing of importance happened during the first day's march. The countries through which they passed appertained to the allies of the *Cempoallians*, and consequently to their own; they were therefore amicably received, and furnished with a sufficient quantity of provisions. In this manner they arrived on the frontiers of *Tlascala*. The territory of *Tlascala* was about fifty miles in circumference: the chain of mountains which crosses it is considered as a ridge of the highest in the world, and extends the whole length of South America. The Spaniards call these mountains the —

Peter. Cordilleras.

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John.

John. And the French the *Cordillieres*.

The Father. They are also named in French the *Cordilleres des Andes* : hence they are often simply called in German The *Andes*. The English use both names.

The inhabitants of these mountains are evidently distinguished from all the other natives of America by their extraordinary courage and excessive love of liberty. They had shaken off the yoke of the Mexicans, and had formed themselves into a republic, which had hitherto proved invincible. Every district in this war-like country had its deputies or representatives, who in the name of their peculiar province or town answered for the rest in *Tlascala*, the capital city ; and the assembly of these deputies composed the superior council and legislative power of the whole nation. The form of their government therefore was Aristocratic. Do you comprehend the meaning of this term, Nicholas ?

Nicholas. Oh, yes, father. The sovereign power was lodged in the hands of the principal inhabitants.

The Father. You are right. *Tlascala* appears to have been the only instance of a perfect Aristocracy among a people, who, on account of their uncivilized manners,

manners, must still be reckoned savages. Pride and the love of liberty, courage and an ardent desire of vengeance, formed the principal features in the character of this small but formidable nation. In vain had Montezuma endeavoured to subdue them; and equally in vain had ambitious projectors among their own people risen, and attempted to elect themselves into tyrants. The Tlascalans resisted usurpation of every kind, and preserved to themselves the possession of that most precious of all human blessings—Liberty.

Cortez was naturally desirous of reckoning so estimable and warlike a nation among the number of his allies. No sooner therefore did he arrive on the frontiers of *Tlascala*, than he resolved to send to them an embassy of peace in the Indian manner, with all the accustomed ceremonies.

Mathias. In what did these ceremonies consist, father?

The Father. I will describe them. Four of the principal Cempoallians were chosen for the embassy, and Marian took upon herself the care of composing an oration, which they were to learn by rote. They were then dressed in long cotton cloaks; on the left arm they bore a large shell instead of a buckler

ler, and in their right hand held an arrow ornamented with white feathers, the point of which was bent downwards. This signified their intention to be pacific; on the contrary an arrow decorated with red feathers signified war. Thus attired they departed, perfectly free from apprehension, convinced that no injury would be done them. But one thing was still necessary for their security, and this was, to keep the high road, it being there only that the pacific ornaments of the embassy guaranteed them from insult. The Indians confirmed this custom by a denomination, which in our language is equal to the *rights of the people*.

Upon the arrival of these four envoys at *Tlascala*, they were conducted and entertained in a manner agreeable to the nature of their embassy, and the next day were summoned before the superior council assembled to hear their propositions. All the members were seated according to their age upon blocks of a certain rare wood. The envoys entered with marks of the most profound respect, that is to say, with their heads covered with their cloaks, and holding up the pacific arrow. The members of the council half rose to receive them; when the envoys made a particular reverence
after

after the manner of the country to each, then advanced slowly to the middle of the hall, prostrated themselves, and waited in respectful silence for permission to speak. This being granted, they seated themselves cross-legged on the ground, and those among them who had learnt the oration by rote delivered it in these terms:

“ Noble and free States! Powerful and courageous people! Your friends and allies, the Cacique of *Cempoalla*, and the Caciques of the mountains, salute you, and wish you a plentiful harvest, and the destruction of your enemies! They also apprise you that a people of celestial origin from the east are lately come among them, arrived by sea in large palaces, and armed with the thunder and lightning of the gods. They inform us, that they are worshippers of a God, far more powerful than ours, who will endure neither tyranny nor human victims. Their chief is sent by a very potent monarch, who, from a principle of religion, is desirous of putting an end to the abuses and violence which Montezuma has occasioned among us. This said chief has already delivered us from the oppression under which we languished: he now finds it necessary to cross your territory in his way to Mexico,

Mexico, and is desirous of knowing what are your complaints against the tyrant, that he may at the same time defend your rights and his own, and number them among the other motives of his journey. His intentions toward you are consequently amicable, and all he asks in return is the liberty of a free passage through your dominions. Be assured therefore that he has your interest only in view; that his arms are but the instruments of justice, and that they who bear them are naturally pacific, and have recourse to rigour only when first attacked or offended."

This harangue being concluded, the ambassadors again fell on their knees, and in that posture made a profound bow; after which resuming their former position, they awaited the reply in silence. The members of the council answered that they returned them thanks for the intelligence they had brought; that they should take the matter into consideration, and then give their answer in form; after which the ambassadors withdrew, and the deliberation began. The council was divided into two opinions; the one for peace, and the other for war. At the head of the last was Xicotencatl, a young chief of an ardent and courageous spirit, but too prone

prone to unsheath the sword of war. His party by degrees gained the ascendant, and it was resolved that they should detain the ambassadors under various pretexts, with the view of gaining time, and putting themselves in a state of defence. Eight days passed in this manner, and Cortez and his allies began to suspect the cause of the delay: they were in consequence resolved to advance, in order to learn what was become of their ambassadors, and to know the sentiments of the Tlascalkans concerning their propositions. They had not proceeded far before they met a body of the natives armed, who boldly opposed their passage. An engagement therefore commenced, which caused the Indians much bloodshed, while the Spaniards, defended by their cotton cuirasses, had only a few of their people slightly wounded, although the number of their enemies more than ten times exceeded their own. But what could courage alone, without order and good weapons, effect against the tactics of the Europeans and the destructive power of their fire-arms? After this first victory, Cortez penetrated into the country, and the next day had the pleasure of seeing two of his envoys arrive, accompanied by some Tlascalans, who
threw

threw the blame of the event that had occurred the preceding evening on one of their allies, a people called *Oromies*, who, unknown to the Tlascalans, had commenced hostilities, and who, as they deserved, had been punished by the loss of their bravest chiefs. Having made this short excuse, they returned without any clearer explanation of their sentiments. But the key to this mysterious conduct was soon obtained; for the Spaniards, continuing their march toward *Tlascala*, were met the day following by the other two envoys in a most deplorable state. They fell at the feet of Cortez in tears, embraced his knees, and complained, with the most expressive gestures that the perfidious Tlascalans regardless of the sacred rights of nations, had loaded them with chains, in order to sacrifice them to their gods, but that during the night they had found means to escape. To this they added, that the Tlascalans had destined the whole Spanish army to be immolated to their gods.

Cortez now knew what he had to rely on, and resolved courageously to face the danger how great soever. With this design he proceeded on his march, and soon found himself furrounded by an innumerable body of Tlascalans with their

their allies, headed by the warlike Xicotencatl, who commanded in chief. The engagement soon commenced, and proved one of the most bloody. While it continued, an event in itself of small importance was near causing the total overthrow of the Spanish army.

A cavalier of that nation pierced the thick battalions of the enemy with such ardour, that he was entirely separated from his own people, and every where surrounded. He received several wounds, and his horse being at length killed threw his rider, who fell dead to the ground. The Indians immediately cut off the horse's head, stuck it on the point of a lance, and carried it in triumph throughout their army, to show every one that the monster, was not, as they thought, invincible.

This incident inspired the Indians with such courage, that they fought with an intrepidity the Spaniards were unable to resist. The dreadful moment of an entire defeat seemed rapidly approaching, when to the great astonishment of the Spaniards, who began to give way, the war whoop, or cry of war, and all hostilities on a sudden ceased: the horns of the enemy sounding a retreat were heard, and their numerous army,

army, from incomprehensible reasons, left the field in silence.

Theophilus. How extraordinary!—What could be the cause?

The Father. It was afterward known from some prisoners that their principal chiefs had been slain, and that their places could not be immediately supplied; add to which, they considered the horse's head as a sufficient mark of their victory. Xicotencatl carried it from the field with his own hand, and afterward sent it to the Supreme Council.

Cortez chose an advantageous post, in which he fortified himself, and, resolving if possible to bring the Tlascilans to an amicable treaty, sent some of the prisoners to their General, with the commission of exhorting him to peace, at the same time threatening him with the most severe vengeance should he continue to resist his overtures.

This proposition threw Xicotencatl into such a fury, that he caused those who made it to be treated in the most cruel manner, and sent them back to the Spanish camp, covered with wounds, to announce to their General that the next morning at day break he should appear with an innumerable army, in order to take him and all his people prisoners, and

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as an oblation that he should sacrifice them to his gods.

This news was not very consolatory; but it was accompanied with a present that in some measure softened its asperity; for Xicotencatl at the same time sent them three hundred Indian fowls and a quantity of other provisions, that his enemies might feast before he sacrificed them.

Matthias. What could he mean by this?

The Father. That their flesh, of which he designed to make a great entertainment, might have the better flavour. The Spaniards could only laugh at this rhodomontade, and regale themselves with what he had sent them, that they might renew their strength for the engagement that was to take place the succeeding day. Xicotencatl faithfully kept his word: at break of day he appeared with a very formidable army, and the engagement began with uncommon fury on both sides. Success appeared long doubtful; but at length the military science of the Europeans prevailed, notwithstanding the numbers and obstinate courage of the enemy. The Tlascalans retreated, and the Spaniards remained masters of the field of battle; but this third defeat was not sufficient entirely

tirely to subdue the courage of this warlike nation. 'Tis true, they were now persuaded that the Europeans were sorcerers, who could not be overcome by ordinary means; but they still hoped that the art of their own magicians would be able to counteract the spells of their enemies.

Charlotte. Had they then magicians among them, Papa?

The Father. They had priests, who deceived the people by making them believe, by different sorts of illusions, that they could look into futurity, and perform many things surpassing human power. These were consulted, and the opinion they delivered was this: That the Spaniards were the children of the Sun; that while day continued, fortified by his rays, they were invincible; but that during night, when the sun withdrew his paternal influence, their supernatural strength decayed, and they fell into the state of weakness common to other men.

The superstitious Tlascalans, fully persuaded of the truth of this assurance, hastened to avail themselves of so important a discovery by a nocturnal attack; but Cortez was too prudent and too watchful to be caught in the snares of such an enemy. He had so prudently disposed

disposed his sentinels and advanced posts, that he was informed of the threatened danger in time to take the necessary measures for his defence. When the Tlascalans therefore advanced, they found the Spaniards already under arms; and although their attack was extremely obstinate and fierce, they were nevertheless repulsed with great loss.

When the poor Indians found that even their magic could effect nothing against these enemies, it became a decided point that the Spaniards were more than men; for how otherwise could it be accounted for, that in every engagement where the Tlascalans had fallen by thousands, not one of the strangers had been slain? The difficulty was, to determine whether they were beneficent or noxious beings, and this appeared an insolvable enigma.

In this state of incertitude the first step they took was to sacrifice to their gods some of the magicians who had deceived them. They then sent a solemn embassy to demand peace.

The ambassadors, who were composed of the principal men of the nation, approached the Spanish camp in their ceremonial habits, ornamented with white plumes, the symbol of peace, and from afar gave the accustomed marks of the
most

most profound respect. They stopped several times, touched the ground with their hand, and then carried it to their lips. This ceremony was repeated till they came within the lines of the Spanish camp, which they took great care to fumigate, when they once more testified their respect in the manner I have described.

Cortez received them with affected dignity, in order to impose on them still more by his majestic air, after which he commanded them to speak. They obeyed, and historians have transmitted to us the following singular address: "If you are evil deities at enmity with us, we bring you five slaves whose blood you may drink, and whose flesh you may devour; if, on the contrary, you are beneficent beings, receive an offering of incense and divers coloured plumes; but if you are men, accept meat and bread to nourish you." They added, that they were come to implore pardon for the hostilities their countrymen had committed, and at the same time to ask for peace. Cortez upon this, with assumed haughtiness and dignity, reproached them severely with having so obstinately rejected his pacific overtures; but added, that he was notwithstanding willing to forget the past, if they were content to remain

remain quiet, and give him satisfaction for the injuries he had received. With this reply he left them.

No sooner had this answer reached *Tlascala*, than the Council published a general order to all those inhabiting the environs, to supply the camp of these extraordinary strangers with provisions, strictly prohibiting their receiving any thing in payment; an order which was executed with a dispatch and punctuality that astonished the Spaniards.

Two days after this, a grand procession from *Tlascala* arrived at the camp. The dress of those who composed it, demonstrated that it was a second embassy of peace; and Cortez gave orders that it should be admitted without the least mark of distrust.

At the head of this embassy was the brave Xicotencatl; his suite was composed of fifty of the principal men of the nation, magnificently attired, and he himself wore a long white garment tucked up in the military fashion, and ornamented with feathers and precious stones. With respect to his person, it was tall, erect, and muscular, and his whole deportment announced an elevated soul and personal courage.

After having saluted the General respectfully,

spectfully, according to the manner of his country, without having asked any previous permission he seated himself, and in a manly voice told him, that he alone had been the cause of the hostilities that had been committed, from the persuasion that the Spaniards were of his enemy Montezuma's party; that for this reason he voluntarily delivered himself into the hands of his conqueror, in the hope, by these means, of obtaining pardon for the state, which was really guiltless of what had been done, and of procuring for it the peace which he was ordered to solicit in the name of the council, the chiefs, and the people; that the city of *Tlascala* was ready to receive him and his whole army, and to treat with them amicably.

Cortez was so pleased with the generosity and noble frankness of this young warrior, that he could not avoid testifying his esteem for him; though he at the same time did not fail to reproach him severely with his criminal resistance. He however concluded with an assurance, that conformably to their invitation he would in a few days visit *Tlascala*. In the interim a new embassy arrived from Montezuma with fresh presents, but new expostulations touching the design which Cortez expressed of proceeding to
Mexico.

Mexico. The grand point of the commission appeared to be the preventing of the Spaniards forming an alliance with the Tlascalans. With this view the ambassadors drew an alarming picture of the perfidy of that nation; but Cortez, with perfect indifference, replied, that he as little feared secret stratagems as open hostilities. During this time the Tlascalans were under apprehensions lest, as Cortez had not first visited their city, the ambassadors of Montezuma had succeeded in inspiring him with suspicions concerning them. Totally therefore to erase every idea of distrust, they resolved that all the members of the supreme council should be sent to the camp, and offer themselves as hostages. This was accordingly done with the greatest pomp: each member was clothed in a white robe, the emblem of peace, and carried by inferior officers in a kind of litter. The most considerable of this august body was Xicotencatl, the father of the young chief who bore his name, a venerable old man, who, though become blind with age, still retained his understanding in full vigour. He caused himself to be brought near Cortez, embraced him with a noble frankness, and that he might, by his touch, form an idea of his person, felt his face, and

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the different parts of his body : he then addressed him in a speech so energetic and beautiful, that it merits being preserved as a model of manly eloquence. According to the Spanish historians it was conceived in these terms :

“ Generous chief ! whether or not thou art of immortal race, the Supreme Council of *Tlascala*, who thus give thee the greatest possible proof of its obedience, is not the less at thy disposal. We do not mean to excuse the error of our nation, but simply to take the blame of it upon ourselves, in the hope that the sincerity of our repentance will appease thy anger. We alone formed the resolution of opposing thee, and we alone have resolved in person to come and request peace of thee. We are not ignorant that Montezuma has endeavoured to deter thee from forming an alliance with us ; but if thou listenest to his councils, thou shouldst also remember that he is our enemy, if thou even cease to regard him as a tyrant ; yet such he must have already appeared, since he has endeavoured to make thee commit the most flagrant injustice. We do not ask thy assistance against him ; our own strength is sufficient to oppose any enemy, thee alone excepted ; but it concerns us to behold thee give credit to his

his promises, because we are fully acquainted with his artifices. Although blind, a certain light, even while I am speaking, breaks in upon my understanding, and discovers to me afar off the misfortunes into which thou art on the brink of falling. Why should Montezuma prevail upon thee to withdraw the peace thou wouldst otherwise grant? Why wilt thou not yield to our request, and honour our city with thy presence? We are firmly resolved either to obtain thy friendship and confidence, or to resign our liberty into thy hands. Choose which of the two thou wilt prefer; for to us there is no alternative, we must unavoidably become thy friends or thy slaves."

Who could have resisted such an address from the mouth of so venerable an elder? Cortez felt its full force; and answered, that he complied with his desires, and that he need only send people to him to assist in conveying his baggage and removing his artillery.

The next morning five hundred Tamenes or carriers appeared in the camp, disputing the honour of bearing the most heavy burdens. Cortez directed the march, and it was conducted with as much order, and in as close ranks, as if he had been going to give battle; a

precaution which this prudent chief observed in all his marches, and which greatly contributed to the success of his enterprises.

Their entry into *Tlascala* resembled a triumph; the streets were thronged with people who rent the air with exclamations of joy, intermingled with the noise of drums, fifes, and other instruments. Young girls strewed the path of these extraordinary guests with flowers; the priests in their sacerdotal habits walked before, burning incense; all the council and the people advanced to salute them, and confidence and pleasure reigned universally throughout the city.

The strangers, whom they called *Teules*, that is to say Gods, were conducted to a commodious and extensive building capable of containing them all, and Cortez had no sooner taken possession of it than he posted a good guard at all the avenues. This precaution was by no means agreeable to the *Tlascalans*, who considered it as a mark of distrust; but when it was explained to them that it was the custom of the European soldiers, when in perfect security, to continue the exercise of war in order to preserve the habit of it, they were satisfied, and *Xicotencatl* expressed

pressed his intention of establishing the same custom in his army. Cortez became more and more sensible of what great utility the friendship of this warlike and generous people would be to him: in consequence he commanded his men to act amicably and with justice toward them, while he himself left no means unemployed to confirm their confidence, and the good opinion they entertained of him.

He was successful in his aim; but his enthusiastic zeal for religion on a sudden created a total change in his conduct, and was near causing the loss of all the advantages he had promised himself from the friendship of the Tlascalans.

In a discourse with one of the Council upon religion, he endeavoured to make him understand that they ought to renounce their false worship, and adore the one only true God, that of the Christians.

The chief replied, that the Tlascalans might, as the Spaniards were, be commanded in battle by one General; but that one God could never be sufficient for them all; that for their part they must have many; one to protect them against storms, another to secure them from inundations, a third to assist them in war, and a fourth to supply their other wants.

wants. In vain Cortez replied, that the God of the Christians took charge of all, and regulated and governed all; it still appeared impossible to the Tlascalan, that one single Divinity could preside over so many different objects. Upon this Cortez sent for the almoner (the ecclesiastic who accompanies the soldiers in war) to satisfy the doubts of the chief, and the other Tlascalans who were present. The almoner exerted his utmost powers of eloquence, and his auditors listened attentively, but when he had concluded they earnestly entreated that he would say nothing upon this point beyond the Spanish quarter; alledging, that if their Teules, (or Gods) heard any thing on the subject, they would certainly revenge themselves by destroying their whole country. Cortez now became furious, and already meditated the design of re-acting the same scene as at *Cempoalla*, viz. extirpating by force the idolatrous worship; but the almoner, Bartholomew d'Olmed, whose name on this occasion deserves to be recorded with honour, prevented it by convincing him of the imprudence of such a proceeding. "Religion," said this enlightened man, "ought not to be extended by fire and the sword, but by mild instructions, and the example of
a wise

a wise and peaceable conduct. It therefore by no means approve the violence committed at *Cemppalla*." Who would not be pleased with these admirable principles of toleration, delivered by an ecclesiastic in an age when almost every Christian, inflamed with a blind and extravagant zeal for conversion, held it just with fire and sword to persecute his fellow beings who differed from him in opinion, and to force upon them a belief of which they had no conviction?

Thus, my children has Divine Providence, even in the dark ages of superstition, from time to time raised up good men, who have exerted their efforts to humanise the most degenerate of their species, and to animate them with the spirit of moderation and charity toward their brethren. Rejoice, my children, that you exist at a period when men of this description can no longer be ranked in the class of miracles; and when you arrive at the age of maturity, ever do your utmost to diffuse among your fellow citizens the same spirit of tolerance and humanity.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

